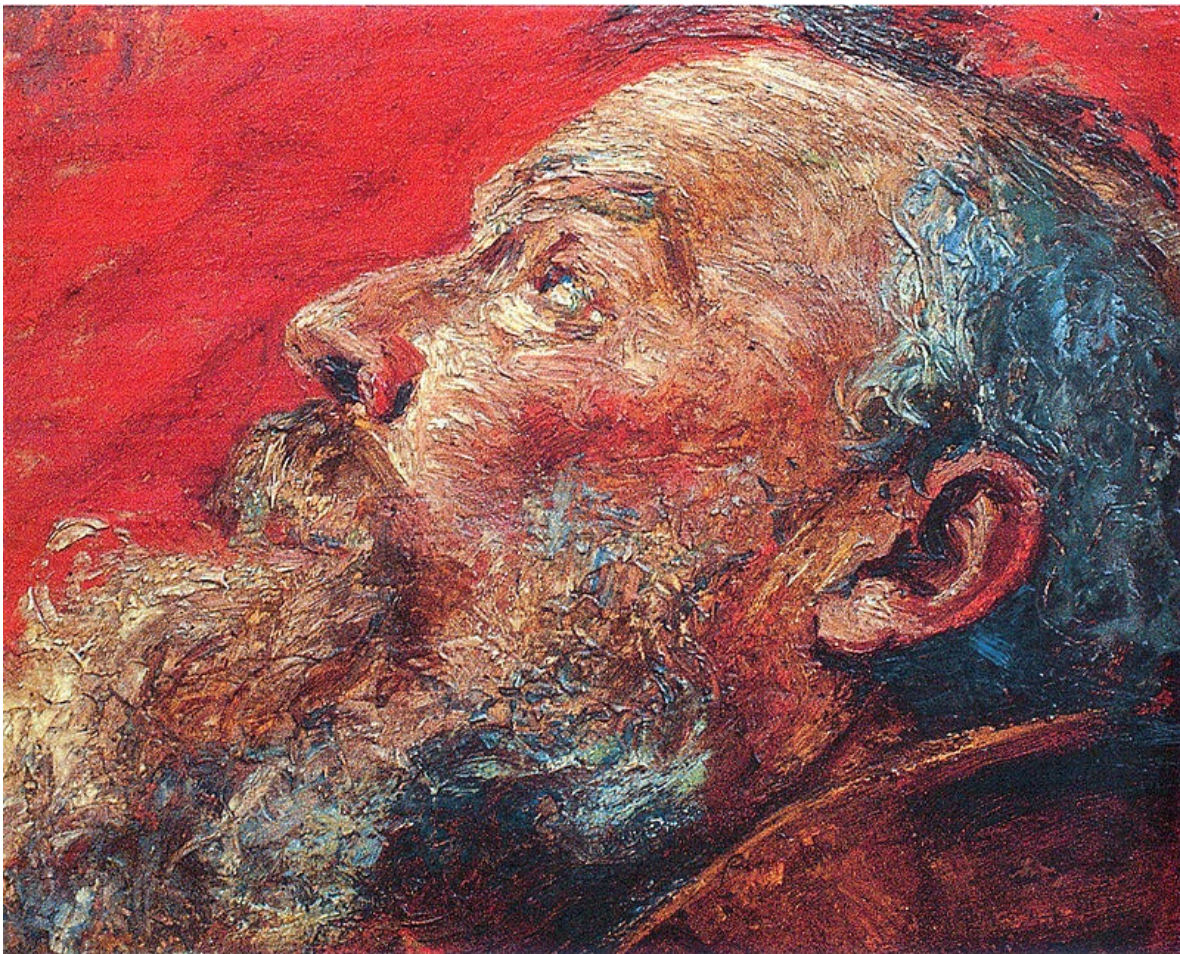

EXPLANATION OF GENESIS
ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI
O.F.M. CAP.
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH



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Title Page and Dedication

Saint Lawrence of Brindisi

Order of the Friars Minor of St. Francis of Capuchins

Complete Works

By the Fathers of the Capuchin Friars of the Venetian Province

Now first published from the original text and illustrated with notes

Dedicated to the Supreme Pontiff Pius XI

Volume III

Explanation of Genesis

Padua

From the Printing Office of the Seminary

1935

Brother Vigilius of Valstagna

Minister General of the entire Order of the Friars Minor of St.
Francis of Capuchins (initials)

By the virtue of these presents, we grant permission for the edition of the Complete Works of Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, O. Min. Cap., prepared and illustrated with notes by the Fathers of our Venetian Province according to the original text and already commenced under our Predecessor, to be made public, preserving all rights that need to be preserved by law.

Given in Rome from our general Curia,
on the 11th of April 1935

(L.S.)

Brother Vigilius of Valstagna
General Minister, O. M. Cap.

We have carefully read the third volume of the Complete Works of Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, which contains his "Explanation of Genesis". We found nothing in it contrary to the mind of the Church but everything consistent with the dogmas of faith and morals.

In Fribourg, Switzerland, on the 25th of March 1934

Brother Hilary of Lucerne, O. M. Cap.

General Custodian

Brother Crispin of Appenzell, O. M. Cap.

Theological Lecturer

Nothing stands in the way of its being printed

In Padua, on the 23rd of April 1935

Canon, Doctor of Canon Law, Olivus Luisetto

Ecclesiastical Censor

Imprimatur

In Padua, on the 24th of April 1935

Charles Agostini, Bishop

Secretariat of State

Of His Holiness

From the Vatican, May 18, 1933

Most Reverend Father,

The August Pontiff, with the same benevolence with which he embraced the volumes previously presented to him, written by St. Lawrence of Brindisi, has received what you recently submitted (Vol. II Lutheranismi Hypotyposis).

The Most Blessed Father, joyfully moved by this gift, wishes you successful progress in the fruitful labors you devote to the publication of such books, and he lovingly blesses you and your fellow members.

Meanwhile, with the appropriate respect, I sign off

Yours devotedly,

E. Cardinal Pacelli

To the Most Reverend Father

Vigilius of Valstagna

General Minister, O.F.M.

of St. Francis of Capuchins

Preface to the Explanation of Genesis

I. - On St. Lawrence's Exegetical Work in General

It is easily evident that St. Lawrence pursued the study of Sacred Scriptures with the utmost love. For anyone who has even casually read through all his works will uncover references, phrases, words, and allusions to the Sacred Books throughout. The Saint himself declares that he dedicated all his time and studies to reading the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, he professes that the light of divine truth shone brightly before the eyes of his mind to recognize and interpret mysteries, through which he discovered the treasures of heavenly wisdom and the richest archives of natural philosophy within the sacred books.

In fact, in investigating the inspired books, he appears both divinely instructed and endowed with the best natural human ability. Besides his most acute intellect, he was greatly aided by his extraordinary memory and his prodigious proficiency in oriental languages. Such was his ease of memory that, as a young novice living in Verona, he wrote down sermons he had heard only once verbatim. Moreover, after completing his theological studies, he asserted that, due to the fidelity of his memory, he could reconstruct the Scriptures, not only in Latin but also in Hebrew, if they were lost. He was so adept in oriental languages—Greek, Chaldean, Hebrew—that his contemporaries claimed the gift of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) was bestowed upon him by God. Even the Hebrews, due to his perfect knowledge of the Hebrew language and matters, thought him to be a Hebrew.

Finally, he was found to be exceptionally well-prepared for the study of the Scriptures through his philosophical, dogmatic, exegetical,

and patristic training. This preparation is also evident from the fact that he knew many Hebrew authors, Greek and Latin Church Fathers, and a great number of exegetes directly from their writings, as well as many secular authors.

Such great love for the Sacred Scriptures and such solid preparation for dealing with them motivated St. Lawrence to dedicate himself to their exposition as much as possible, not as much as he desired. He stated on various occasions that he intended to interpret several books. In chapter 2 of the Explanation of Genesis, speaking of the divine name τετραγράμματον (Tetragrammaton), he adds: "About which we, God granting us life and grace, will bring something forward in the book of Exodus." Again, shortly thereafter, speaking about Marriage and citing St. Paul's opinion to the Ephesians, he promises a further treatise on marriage: "For in its proper place, God guiding, we will discuss it." Finally, in chapter 4, after speaking briefly about grace and free will, he did not wish to present "many other things, which we leave to another time more appropriate and serious for discussion"; which perhaps indicates an explanation in the Epistle to the Romans. Moreover, among the works attributed to St. Lawrence, an explanation of Ezekiel is mentioned. But neither was he ever able to write the treatises mentioned above, nor has the explanation of Ezekiel come to light to this day. It remains for us to speak about the Explanation of Genesis, which we publish in this volume.

II. - On the Explanation of Genesis Specifically

Description of the Codex

The codex containing the Explanation published here is preserved in the archive of the Capuchin Friars of the Venetian Province among the works of St. Lawrence. It is bound in parchment, with an

external size of 16 × 22.5 cm and an internal written size of 12 × 17.5 cm, consisting of 270 leaves, not 269, as the collector mistakenly numbered by repeating number 34. On the exterior cover, there is an embossed red seal with the inscriptions: "IHS", below: "Archiv. A.", below: "Colto: P – 6", below: "Busta – –", and finally: "Fascic. 1". On the spine, there is an inscription made by a different hand: "Explanation in Genesis by St. Lawrence of Brindisi in his own hand". A similar inscription is found on a glued slip on the upper margin of the first leaf, also written by a different hand: "Explanation of Genesis by the Very Reverend Father Lawrence of Brindisi, Capuchin preacher, in his own hand." The codex paper is of a yellowish hue. The handwriting varies between wide and dense, making some leaves difficult to read. Additions are frequently made in the margins and at the bottom, especially in chapters 1 and 2, by the same hand that wrote the text of the codex.

Authenticity of the Work

There is no doubt that the Explanation of Genesis handed down in the described codex is a genuine work of St. Lawrence, written by his own hand. Beginning with external criteria, it holds the first place among the works of St. Lawrence that are religiously preserved as relics in the same archive. Moreover, it has been recognized and reviewed by the Sacred Congregation of Rites along with other genuine works. Finally, not neglecting the inscriptions appended to the codex, undeniable signs of authenticity are gathered from the internal criteria themselves. The manner of writing—the strokes, the method of abbreviation, the neglect of punctuation—as well as the style, character, and usage of language are those of St. Lawrence, as known from his other works.

Timeframe

We cannot definitively determine the exact time when St. Lawrence completed the Explanation. However, it is likely that it should be

assigned to the years 1584-90, the period during which he was preaching to the Hebrews or serving as a Lecturer in Theology and Sacred Scripture. Indeed, it seems that he lacked the time for such works afterward. He was placed in charge of the Provinces of Tuscany, Venice, Switzerland, and Genoa, then sent as General Commissary to Cologne and Prague by Clement VIII until 1599. Shortly after (1602), he was elevated to the governance of the entire Order and finally consumed with continuous legations at the courts of princes, kings, emperors, and the Supreme Pontiffs almost throughout Europe as a Spiritual Delegate in the war against the Turks until his death. Ultimately, these same occupations seem to have been the cause of the work remaining unfinished.

Author's Purpose

We can outline the intention and purpose with which St. Lawrence composed and intended to publish the Explanation from both the nature of the work, to be described below, and the circumstances of the times. It is evident that much effort was made, driven by the Roman See, towards the conversion of the Hebrews both by others and by St. Lawrence. Indeed, on August 29, 1584, Gregory XIII, through the Apostolic Letters "Sancta Mater Ecclesia," instructed all prelates of any rank, even those distinguished by the cardinalate, who had the care of souls, to ensure that apostolic men would hold sermons for the Hebrews in Hebrew every Sabbath within the limits of their respective jurisdictions, proving the messiahship of Jesus according to Catholic interpretations of the Scriptures.

Then, having heard of the saintliness and admirable doctrine of St. Lawrence, he was summoned to Rome after completing his Lenten preaching in Venice with great praise in the years 1583-84, to entrust him with the task of announcing the Gospel to the Hebrews. This office, confirmed by Clement VIII, was carried out by Lawrence in Rome and other cities of Italy and abroad with great admiration

from all, including the Hebrews themselves. It is undoubtedly apostolic zeal that drove him to comment on the Sacred Books to benefit them also in writing. If anyone believes that St. Lawrence labored over the commentary on the Scripture books to serve as a lecturer in sacred theology, we do not deny it, but it is also clear from the nature of the commentary that he was laboring to convert the Jews at that time.

Structure and Content

Among the works of St. Lawrence, the Explanation of Genesis holds a unique place as a strictly defined commentary. The work unfolds as follows: After a brief introduction in which the study of the Scriptures is highly praised, the Holy Author presents four preliminary dissertations on the tropes and figures of words and sentences, and then extensively discusses the multiple senses of the Scriptures. Then, taking the first verse of chapter 1 of Genesis as a starting point, he conducts two dissertations on philosophical questions: On the Creation of the World in Time and On the Principles of Things. After completing the introductory treatises, the commentary itself follows, encompassing an exegesis of the first 11 chapters.

While commenting on chapter 1, in addition to the Latin Vulgate text, he also provides the original Hebrew and Chaldean texts (i.e., the first Chaldean Paraphrase), and sometimes the Targum Yerushalmi (also known as the second Chaldean Paraphrase), translated into Latin before the commentary. In other chapters, he joins Latin translations of the Hebrew, Chaldean, and Greek texts to the Latin Vulgate edition, sometimes quoting the original Hebrew, Chaldean, and Greek words when the interpretation of the text seems to depend on them. The Holy Author himself translates the Hebrew, Chaldean, and Greek texts, as well as the Greek Fathers and

philosophers, directly into Latin from the original texts, without using any versions known at that time.

The Author primarily labors to find the literal sense. Therefore, to achieve a more accurate and certain sense, he meticulously investigates the etymology of Hebrew words. “First, the most truthful foundation of the letter must be laid,” he says, “so that the letter does not rest on a false foundation.” Then, he frequently brings forward the opinions of ancient Rabbis, often including their names, and the traditions of the Hebrews. He subsequently cites the Holy Fathers and Catholic exegetes, and finally presents his own opinion, often differing from other interpreters, leaving everything to the judgment of the wise. When the opportunity arises, he adds theological or philosophical discussions after the exposition of the verses.

Sources Used in the Explanation

From what we have said, it is apparent which authors St. Lawrence consulted while composing the Commentary. In addition to the ancient Rabbis, he refers to major rabbinical, haggadic, and Talmudic collections of authority among the Hebrews. Among Catholics, he particularly uses Nicholas of Lyra, Tostatus, and frequently refers to the great Hebrew Lexicon of Sanctes Pagninus, titled *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae*. Finally, he often brings forward the opinions of many without naming them, saying: others say, our people say, others hold, etc.

Regarding the Hebrew and Chaldean texts of the Bible and the Rabbis, it is likely that St. Lawrence used the Rabbinic Masoretic Bible, edited by Giovanni de Gara in Venice in 1568 (according to the Hebrews, 5328). A copy now preserved in the Marciana Library in Venice, and fortunately discovered by us, is inscribed: “Places of the Capuchin Friars of Venice,” in the same handwriting as other books marked in the Capuchin library. It seems to have been stolen

when religious orders were suppressed in 1810. Furthermore, this edition contains the commentaries of Rabbi Aben Ezra and Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, or simply RaScI, frequently cited by St. Lawrence in the Pentateuch. Our opinion is also confirmed by the fact that the Chaldean text of Genesis and the commentaries of Aben Ezra and Solomon, cited by the Holy Author, match this edition, while other editions by Arias Montano and the Complutensian University made at that time differ slightly. Finally, the year of the edition is close to the time when St. Lawrence composed his Commentary.

Significance of the Explanation

Leaving the definitive judgment of the value of this Explanation to historians, we will only touch upon the ancient aspects. The miraculous knowledge of the Hebrew language is demonstrated, as well as the accurate and independent use of sources, and the proposition of well-founded opinions by the Author. Additionally, the theological and philosophical discussions interspersed with the expositions are notable for their solidity. All of this is expressed, as usual, in elegant and polished language.

Certainly, if it had been published immediately after its completion, students of Sacred Scripture of that time would have derived considerable benefit from it. This is especially true because, contrary to usual practice, the opinions of the Rabbis are both faithfully and kindly proposed and considered. Therefore, it is regrettable, as we conclude, that this work of St. Lawrence is not complete, and indeed, that some parts of the work have perished.

III. - About Our Edition of the Explanation of Genesis

On the Presented Text

We have taken the utmost care, as always, to faithfully present the text of the codex. If any obvious errors occurred, they have been corrected in the text, with the original reading of the codex provided at the bottom. Regarding the arrangement of the material, we encountered no difficulty, as all parts are found in the correct order in the codex. We do want to bring one exception to the reader's attention. It concerns a particular section where the Author speaks about the composition of the human body. In the codex, this section is placed at the end of chapter 5, on folios 224a–229a, but we have placed it after verse 7 of chapter 2, "The Lord God formed man," due to the similarity of the subject matter. Moreover, it does not pertain to the sequence of the commentary.

A greater difficulty arose from the lack of punctuation; we have fully added it to the text ourselves. Regarding the Hebrew words, which the Author mostly left without Masoretic points, we have proceeded as follows: we have marked all the verses of the Hebrew and Chaldean texts where they are sometimes marked in the codex (using for the Hebrew text the Kittel edition, and for the Chaldean text the aforementioned Rabbinic Masoretic Bible), leaving other words scattered here and there as they stand in the codex. For the Greek words, which the Author wrote without accents, we have always used the edition made by L. Van Ess. For the Latin text of the Vulgate, we continuously used the new Edition of the Sacred Bible prepared by A. Gramatica. Finally, Hebrew or Greek words written in Latin letters by St. Lawrence, we have expressed in either Hebrew or Greek letters.

On the Added Notes

As usual, we have annotated at the bottom of the pages the references to the Scriptures, the Fathers, and other authors that the Holy Author mostly left unmentioned. In citing the Rabbis, we have willingly used the aforementioned Rabbinic Masoretic Bible, as it is certain that St. Lawrence himself used it. The Commentary on the Pentateuch by Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel, as well as the Book of Roots by David Kimchi (not available in the public libraries of Padua and Venice but kindly made available to us as much as possible by Dr. Adolph Ottolenghi, the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Venice), we cite from ancient editions: the first titled פירוש התורה (Pirush HaTorah), edited in Venice by Samuel Archivolti, at the command of Giovanni Bragadin, by Giovanni de Gara in 1579, according to the Hebrews in 5339; the second titled ספר השרשים (Sefer HaShorashim), edited in Venice by Marco Antonio Giustiniani in 1547, according to the Hebrews in 5309.

For convenience, we have added marginal notes summarizing the matters discussed in the text and have compiled not only a synthetic-analytical index but also an alphabetical index of notable names and subjects contained in this volume. Furthermore, we have deemed it necessary to refrain entirely from commenting on the opinions of the Holy Author, whether philosophical, theological, or biblical, so as not to appear to be commenting on the Commentary itself. However, this purpose did not prevent us from adding some illustrative notes to clarify the Holy Author's views or, where necessary, to explain Hebrew texts that were sometimes too literally translated by the Holy Author by carefully examining the Hebrew context.

Having prefaced these points, we sincerely thank those who provided valuable assistance in preparing this volume. Firstly, Dr. Adolph Ottolenghi, the aforementioned Rabbi, and Professor H. Cassuto, who helped us in preparing the notes regarding the Rabbis.

We are especially grateful to the Most Reverend Father Hilarinus of Lucerne and Father Crispin of Appenzell of the Swiss province, who reviewed and censored the entire edition, reading the work in its entirety and offering wise advice.

Finally, to the Most Reverend Father Vigilus of Valstagna, who, with the approval of all, was unanimously elected three years ago as the Supreme Moderator of our Order and the successor of St. Lawrence, having eagerly started the publication of St. Lawrence's works and published four volumes with universal applause, we humbly offer this work of ours, whatever it may be, as a sign of filial obedience and loving devotion.

Padua, January 1, 1935

The Editor Fathers

Proem

Divine Moses, a celestial, majestic oracle and a world marvel, filled with the holiest Spirit of God, not only surpassed all prophets in the knowledge of heavenly secrets and the incomprehensible wisdom of God—like Solomon surpassing all kings—but he also excelled all mortals in the knowledge of natural things and in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, leaving them far behind, so that he rightly claimed the name of supreme philosopher and deservedly was called the alpha of the wise. Therefore, since this divine and most holy Prophet was the pinnacle of all theologians who flourished in antiquity and the column of all philosophers, not only is the utmost and most complete faith to be placed in what he wrote, inspired by the Spirit of God, about the nature and properties of the works of the supreme God, but also in what he physically wrote about nature. For having been educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who were the fountains of human sciences, what he committed to writing about the nature of things should be deemed to contain nothing against the laws of true philosophy or against the true and exact judgment of natural reason; nor would anyone of sound mind believe that he was either deceived by ignorance or wished to deceive others out of ill will, since he was simultaneously holy and most learned, full of all kinds of wisdom.

Hence I have revered this divine man first as a sacred summit of divine theology, and then also as a pillar of human philosophy and a treasure house of all sciences, with great veneration and admiration, especially in his creation of the cosmos or cosmogony, that is, the genesis of the world contained in the six days of Genesis. In this construction of the entire worldly mechanism, Moses appeared to me not only as a theologian discussing the works of divine power and creation of things but also as a supreme philosopher imparting

the knowledge of natural philosophy and genuine understanding of natural things. Whatever has been handed down about the nature of things by Plato, Aristotle, or other physiologists, all this is presented more clearly in the cosmogony of Moses to those who observe more closely.

Particularly, there are ten topics that are discussed in natural philosophy: the principles of things; common accidents to things such as motion and time; the nature of the heavens and stars; the nature of elements; their actions, antipathy, and sympathy; exhalation and the meteorological phenomena occurring in the air; minerals; plants; animals; and finally, the constitution of man through the soul that comes from without. All these topics are contained in the cosmogony of Moses as if in a perfect compendium and synopsis, just as in man, the whole of nature, which for this reason is called a Microcosm by the wise. Moses deals with the principles of things by establishing heaven and earth as the generative principles of things; he discusses common accidents: motion and time; he discusses the nature of the sky and stars; he talks about the elements: earth, water, and air; he talks about the generation of things; about exhalation; about minerals; about plants; about animals; and finally, about man. All these topics are discussed by Moses in the first three chapters of Genesis, which teach the entire cosmogony, or rather cosmography, in very few words but with fullest and truest expressions and sentences.

What has not been observed by all is that God, who has hidden the divine mysteries of the Sacred Scriptures from the worldly wise and prudent and revealed them to the little ones, has deigned to reveal these things to me, the least of all theologians and philosophers, according to His will, for He Himself is the Lord of all sciences. When I devoted myself to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, the light of divine truth, which illuminates every man coming into this world, shone with great brilliance upon the eyes of my mind so that

in this field of Sacred Scripture, along with the treasure of celestial wisdom, namely sacred theology, I also found the most precious and richest archive of sacred natural philosophy; this was all the dearer and more precious to me because no other method could yield any certainty about natural things.

What the physiologists, the philosophers, have written about nature is always considered to be mere opinion. For all things are difficult: a man cannot explain them in speech. For God made all things good in their time and delivered the world to the disputation of men so that man does not find the work that God has done from the beginning to the end. Hence, since God made man upright, he himself has been involved in infinite questions. What is written here is not according to opinion but to truth; for God is the author of these things, the supreme cause of all nature and the principle of all things that exist by nature, the supreme artist and most wise creator. Thus, we can acquire a better understanding of the natural world from Him than from any other source. From where better to draw pure and clear water than from a living fountain? God indeed teaches man science, as the Royal Psalmist says, He is the source of all wisdom, the Lord and master of all sciences; therefore, the same Psalmist declares blessed are the men whom God has taught and instructed in His law: "Blessed is the man whom you instruct, O Lord, and teach out of your law."

Thus, having dismissed the twists and turns of philosophers who have entangled themselves in endless questions and who, although they have recognized many of God's invisible attributes through His creations, have nevertheless declared themselves wise and have become fools because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, but became vain in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. As the Apostle says elsewhere, they are walking in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the

ignorance that is in them due to the blindness of their hearts; I believe I could deliver a clear and exact knowledge and doctrine of God's works, rather than that of colors by the blind or of the sunlight by a night owl or any other light-shunning bird, as we have drawn pure, clear, and exceedingly true knowledge and science from the most pure fountains of Mosaic and divine wisdom. It seemed right to me to dedicate as much time and my studies as allowed to interpreting and revisiting the mysteries of Moses' sacred philosophy, so that whatever he has said about the principles of things, common accidents, the sky, elements, actions, exhalations, minerals, plants, animals, and finally about man, we bring forth into the middle, promote into the light, interpret, declare, and elucidate, relying on the help of the highest God, the light of Christ, and the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit. If we find any true and certain things among the foreign and ethnic philosophers who taught physiology, since God is the author of all truth, we will claim them as if reclaiming them from unlawful possessors; these are those who, as the Apostle says, hold the truth of God in unrighteousness because what can be known about God is manifest to them, for God has shown it to them. If, therefore, we find any truth unjustly held, we will justly demand it back, and we will bring gold and all precious things with the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land, so that from these we may construct a sanctuary to God and a sacred shrine to His name.

Thus, even as Solomon, the most powerful and wise king, borrowed many craftsmen and much timber and stones from the mountains of Lebanon from foreign nations, namely the Tyrians and Sidonians, to build that most august and famous temple to the Most High God. If we therefore find anything consonant with this sacred and divine philosophy among Aristotle, Plato, or Hermes Trismegistus, who was most similar to Moses, we will always accept them as true, like genuine gold tested against a touchstone; conversely, things that do

not accord with this philosophy, we will reject as false and distant from the light of truth, relegating them to outer darkness. For thus God divided light from darkness. I pray to the Most High God, from whom every good gift and every perfect gift comes, and I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... to give me strength according to the riches of His glory... to understand... the breadth, length... height, and depth of this sacred and divine philosophy, that I may never stray from the path of truth, not even by a hair's breadth; but always guided by the heavenly light, like a healthy eye, unobscured by any darkness of blindness or affected by any dizziness, distinguishing light from darkness, and white from black without any error; so that I may always discern the true from the false, lest by some error I be led astray from the path of truth, and cause others, if it so happens that my writings, published from within my domestic walls for all to read, similarly deceive them and lead them astray. I attest to God the Most High, the scrutineer of hearts and secrets of souls, whom the secrets of conscience do not deceive, for everything is naked and open to His eyes, and there is no creature invisible in His presence, and to Christ Jesus, His only Son, our Lord, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, that this is my firm intention and purpose always to believe, confess with my mouth, and write faithfully with my pen what is true, consonant with the truth, and similar to the truth of the Sacred Scriptures of both Testaments and the catholic faith, never diverging in the slightest from universal truth in these or any other of my writings, that anyone reading them might think I have asserted something rashly. Far be it! Far be it! I am a man, I may err; yet I will never be a stubborn defender or proponent of any error; for I confess and profess myself a lover of honest truth; I have always pursued it with all my nerve, all my study, labor, and investigation, as an infinite treasure.

FIRST DISSERTATION ON THE SCHEMES AND TROPES OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

The sacred and divine Scripture is not only exceedingly rich and abundant with multiple meanings; it is always the deepest and most profound and always and everywhere most true, such that with its height it mocks the proud, with its depth it continuously engages the attentive, vigilant, and studious, and with its truth, it always nourishes sweetly and gently. Indeed, it is everywhere sprinkled with all sorts of schemes, tropes, and figurative expressions, which wonderfully adorn it and render it most beautifully decorated.

Therefore, it is wise and eloquent and extremely fruitful. For unlike what frequently happens in most other disciplines, it does not tend to tickle our minds with the allurements of myths and playful trivialities; it does not soothe the ears with destructive songs, nor does it infect the mind with profane beliefs, nor is it accustomed to insinuate any kind of moral ruin into its followers; on the contrary, everywhere serious truth flatters with its healthful seriousness, at every approach that charming wit of wisdom ponders its lyre with sweet tunes, there is nothing so pure that the decrees of Sacred Scripture do not instill into our lives as if by some right. It is not, as many suppose, harsh and unkempt, dry and gloomy, but instead, it is wonderfully polished, beautiful with a certain majesty, delightful, easy, straightforward, accessible to all, and for all who approach it with pious faith and devotion, it feeds the soul with wonderful sweetness. And its study does not comfort our effort only at the end, after a long tedium of the sea has been endured, but right at the threshold, as we set sail from the shore, as we barely begin our journey, it immediately consoles our labor with the most generous reward, while with the faithful sword of understanding we dissect the letter, it immediately nourishes the soul with a kernel that bursts forth and with the most fervent marrow of meanings.

To address all creative labor, which nature has never granted to mortals without effort, we must engage in deliberation, specifically in the peeling away of the bark, that is... they are nourished. To this task, it behooves us to contribute greatly both in diligence and study, and to persist principally in understanding the texts, so that we may grasp the schematic forms and figurative expressions of words, and comprehend the tropic locutions that result from words being transferred from their original meanings to a non-original one, through resemblance and analogy, for the sake of beauty, cultivation, decoration, necessity, or emphasis. Indeed, all the schemes, tropes, and figures of speech, of which the Greeks boast to have been the inventors, have flowed from Sacred Scripture, which surpasses other writings not only in authority, because it is divine, or in utility, because it leads to eternal life, but also in antiquity and the very prominence of its exposition. Therefore, lest we collide with these figurative expressions in our studies of Sacred Scriptures as if they were unknown to us, and either be deterred from our study or be delayed by it, we have deemed it worthwhile to impart some initial knowledge of the tropes and schemes with which Sacred Scripture has used most eloquently many centuries before the masters of eloquence. For many things in the Sacred Scriptures, once the genre of the locution is known, become clear; because of this, the same genres of locutions must be understood, so that where meanings are hidden, this knowledge may assist and open them up to the reader's intention, hidden under schemes and tropes.

Therefore, there are many types of schemes, and also of tropes. A scheme, properly called, is that which, deviating from a simple and straightforward mode of expression, is changed poetically or rhetorically, having significance both in the painting of words and in the embellishing of sentences. Sometimes it remains unchanged; for there are certain schemes that are the illuminations of both words and sentences, by which, as with a more distinguished adornment,

the entire speech is woven and distinguished. Similarly, a trope is the change of a word or discourse, with potency, from its original meaning to an alien one, for the sake of beauty, necessity, cultivation, or emphasis. Hence, expressions are called tropic, not proper, because words are not taken according to their original meanings, but transposed and figuratively, although the speech is shaped both by proper and translated words. However, between a scheme and a trope, this distinction exists: a figure—σχῆμα in Greek, figura in Latin—implies a certain configuration, as the name itself shows, and a style of discourse that is distinct from the common and initially presenting speech, and it is evident that a figure is made with proper words; a trope, however, is made only with words that are translated and transposed from their original to an alien meaning. Thus, we will discuss both tropes and schemes and figures; about tropes first, then about figures.

Therefore, a trope "is the change of a word or discourse from its original meaning to another with potency", as when we say: joyful crops, the word of joy, from its original meaning, where we say joyful people, is transferred with potency to crops. There are eleven types of tropes; in a word, there are seven: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, antonomasia, onomatopoeia, catachresis, metalepsis; in discourse, four: allegory, periphrasis, hyperbaton, and hyperbole.

Metaphor, which in Latin is called "translatio" (translation), occurs when a name or word is transferred due to similarity from the place where it is proper to one where it is not, or where the translated use is better than the proper use: thus we say: joyful crops, meadows laughing, vines budding, youthful bloom, milky whiteness of hair, inflamed with anger, inflamed with desire, slipped by mistake. Similarly, in the Holy Scriptures, Christ is called a lamb, a lion, a sheep, a lily of the valleys, a flower of the field, a young deer, etc.; so: "The Lord will roar from Zion." Indeed, metaphorical expression is very common in Sacred Scripture. It occurs in four ways by

transferred similarity: either from animal to animal, from inanimate to something of the same kind, from animal to inanimate, or from inanimate to animal.

In the first way, as: "Why do the nations rage"; and: "I roared because of the groaning of my heart"; "If I take wings early in the morning"; for both the man about whom these things are said, and the animals from which they are taken, have a soul.

In the second way, as: "Open your gates, O Lebanon"; for the transfer is made from a city to a mountain, both of which are inanimate. Thus we say: nothing is sweeter than the harmony of virtues; charity is the bond of perfection; almsgiving extinguishes sin.

In the third way, from animate to inanimate, as: "The earth opened its mouth"; "Behold, you drive me out this day from the face of the earth"; "Behold, the top of Carmel is bald"; the transfer is made from an animal, to which these attributes apply, to the earth and mountain, which are inanimate; for an animal has a mouth, a face, and a crown, but not the earth or a mountain.

In the fourth way, from inanimate to animal, it is said: "I will remove from you your heart of stone"; a people of stiff neck; hard heart; a hard and harsh or stern man; for hardness belongs not to man, but to inanimate stones: from them, however, the transfer is made to humans. And indeed, such translations are everywhere sprinkled with wonderful ornamentation in Sacred Scripture.

Furthermore, the figure of the image is found after the metaphor, such as in Isaiah: "They will wail as those in labor"; and in Jeremiah: "For wicked men are found among my people, lying in wait as fowlers, setting traps and snares to catch men."

Synecdoche is a trope in which a part is used to represent the whole, or vice versa, or where the following is understood from what

precedes, as is understood from the ship's stern, the sword's blade, or the roof of a house. In Sacred Scripture, synecdoche that shows the whole from a part occurs, for example, when the soul or flesh is used for the entire person, as in: "Man became a living soul"; similarly, we read: "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins"; and also: "The Word became flesh"; in these cases, either part is used to represent the man; for indeed, Jacob's sons' souls did not enter Egypt without bodies, nor was the Word made flesh without a soul.

The type that shows a part from the whole occurs in many places as synecdoche, such as: "Abraham buried his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah"; and: "David slept with his fathers and was buried", etc.; in the Gospel too: "There was a tomb nearby, where they laid Jesus." All these instances should be understood concerning the dead body, just like the words of Mary Magdalene: "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him," that is, the body of my Lord.

This trope includes cases where one stands for many, as in: "A spring was going up from the earth and was watering the whole face of the ground"; indeed, there must have been a multitude of springs, as one alone could not suffice; similarly, the locusts, frogs, and flies in the plagues of Egypt, where there was almost an innumerable multitude of them.

Sometimes the plural is used for the singular, as when we read: "When the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, Why this waste of ointment? ... and they scolded her," when, according to John, only Judas the betrayer had said this. Likewise, "the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him," when only one of them did so, while the other, rebuking his companion, confessed Christ as God.

Sometimes the material is used for the entire composite thing, as when Abraham is said to have been very rich in gold and silver, that is, in gold and silver money; and: "A woman... brought an alabaster flask of ointment," that is, a vessel made of alabaster.

Occasionally, the generic term is used for a specific form, that is, species, as in: "Man became a living soul," which is, according to Hebrew phrasing, a living creature, when God breathed into his face a rational soul, by which he became a rational animal. Or the reverse occurs, where often a specific type is used for the generic, as in: "We are shepherds of sheep, me and my brothers," even though they tended goats, cattle, camels, and donkeys, but sheep is used for the animal common to all these.

And finally, from the events that happen to things, the things themselves are understood, as in Isaiah's: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," for these, bringing about great peace, are put forth by these transformations.

Metonymy is a form of renaming, occurring when causes are used for effects, or effects for causes, or when the contents are referred to by their containers, or containers by their contents, or when things are understood by their signs. We understand the effect by the cause, for example, when we use authors' names in place of their works, saying we have read Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, or Cicero, when we mean their writings or having heard them. Similarly, in Sacred Scripture, we read: "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," and when it says, Moses: "And Moses has those... who proclaim him... every Sabbath"; "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them the Scriptures"; here, the authors stand for their works.

Sometimes the effect is used for the cause, as when we read: "You are my patience... my hope"; and: "My strength," meaning the cause of these virtues, thus the effect is used for the cause.

This also demonstrates content by the container, as in: "I will pour my bucket in the channels," when it's water being poured; so: "Shout joyfully to God, all the earth"; "Egypt rejoiced"; "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets"; and numerous others, where indeed the inhabitants are understood.

Sometimes, conversely, the container is indicated by the content, as in: "The sons of Israel went through the middle... of the sea"; similarly, when they are said to have crossed the Jordan River, they crossed through the dried-up riverbed of both the sea and the river. This occurs in many other places in Scripture.

Antonomasia is a type of expression where a characteristic replaces a name, as when we say the "prince of the Academy" for Plato; the "father and prince of Roman eloquence" for Cicero; the "distinguished prophet" for David; "the apostle" for Paul; "the beloved disciple" for John. It occurs in three ways: from the mind, from the body, or from external aspects. Thus in Sacred Scripture, Solomon is called the "wise," and his father "a man after God's own heart"; Goliath is referred to as the "giant," a spurious man... "six cubits and a span" tall. Christ is also antonomastically called "the Just," as in: "They killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, whom you now have betrayed and murdered"; Christ is called "Son of David," and "Son of Man"; Samson, "strong in might"; John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved"; Paul, "the chosen vessel"; John the Baptist, "great prophet and more than a prophet"; Peter, "the rock of the Church"; and antonomasia is very frequent.

Note that an epithet is similar to antonomasia, and it also occurs in three similar ways. However, it differs from antonomasia in that an epithet always has an adjective form, whereas antonomasia does not.

Onomatopoeia, meaning the creation of a name, such as the mooing of cows, the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, and the like. This trope is very frequent in Sacred Scripture: "The roar of the lion and the voice of the lioness"; "As a lion shall he roar"; and: "Will you... surround the neck of a horse with neighing?" Similarly: "Many dogs that cannot bark"; also: "Sounding bronze and a clanging cymbal"; "the blast of trumpets"; and also the instance: "The cows went straight on the way that leads to Beth-shemesh, going along and lowing."

Catachresis, a certain use or abuse of a word, occurs when something similar and approximate is used for something certain and proper, as when we say: short strength, long counsel, or a large speech. This trope is frequently used in Scripture: "You will break the horns of the sinners, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up"; so when it says: "the horns of the bow"; "the feet of a table or a lampstand"; "the forehead of a roof"; "the lip of a chalice," etc. All these terms are proper to animals; however, to signify things that lack proper appellations, these names are used. This trope differs from metaphor in that metaphor enriches a word that already exists; catachresis, lacking a proper term, uses an alien one; thus, when Scripture speaks of God, it designates His immense power and perfection with names of corporeal quantities, as when it says: "Higher than the heavens, and what can you do? Deeper than the underworld, and how can you know? His measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." Similarly, "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool," which is named after the fish ("probatica" from Latin "probare," to test or prove), not because of the fish but because the water was collected for washing the sacrifices, hence it acquired the name "probatica."

Metalepsis is a type of transference that moves step-by-step from one thing to another, paving the way to what is intended to be conveyed. An example from poetry is the phrase "Speluncis abdidit

atris," where from "atris" (dark) the notion of "tenebrosae" (shadowy), and from "tenebrosae" the idea of "profundae" (deep) is understood. Another example is:

"Post aliquot, mea regna, ... mirabor aristas?"

Here "Post aliquot" is followed by "aristas," meaning years; for by "aristas" (ears of grain) summers are understood, and by summers, years are implied. Similarly, this trope is found in Sacred Scripture: "You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you are blessed and it will go well with you;" labor here stands for the goods acquired through toil. Likewise, "Behold, Behemoth, which I made with you, he eats grass like an ox; his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly;" Behemoth stands for the devil, the devil for an angel created by God, grass for sinful men, and the loins and navel for lust. Since these cannot exist in the devil, they are understood as temptation and incitement to lust.

Allegory, meaning a reversal, is a trope where one thing is shown in the words and another in the meaning, much like a continuous and ongoing metaphor. An example from poetry is:

"Claudite iam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt,"

meaning "stop singing now, we have heard enough." Allegory is very common in Sacred Scriptures. There are three types of allegory found: verbal, factual, and a combination of both. — Verbal, as in: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit;" similarly: "My beloved is white and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand," referring to Christ. — Factual, as in: "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church;" similarly, Abraham having two sons has been allegorically said to represent the two Testaments. — Combination of both, as: "He will be my

son, and I will be his father," spoken of Solomon and, as the Apostle testifies, of Christ, since Solomon was a figure of Christ; similarly, "Out of Egypt I called my son," said by the Prophet of Israel and, according to the Evangelist, of Christ. — Moreover, allegory can sometimes be complete or mixed: complete, as in "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them," etc.; mixed, as in "He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist."

Under allegory, the parable is also included, which is a comparison of things of dissimilar kinds. This is very common throughout Sacred Scripture. It also includes the icon, meaning the comparison of persons to each other, or the events that happen to them, such as: "We have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father," and: "They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God."

Also included is the paradigm, which is the proposition or narrative of an example that encourages or discourages; encouraging, as in: "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth," and: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them"; discouraging, as in: "Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak; remember Lot's wife."

Under allegory, the enigma is also included; it is a somewhat more obscure form of allegory, as with the Sphinx needing an Oedipus or another Solomon to understand what it signifies, such as: "My mother bore me, then she too is born of me"; which signifies ice

being formed from water and then melting back into it. An example in Sacred Scripture is: "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet"; and: "The leech has two daughters, 'Give, give,' they cry," where they represent the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, or lust and greed; similarly: "If you lie down among the sheepfolds, the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with shimmering gold," where the dove represents the Church, the sheepfolds the various conditions of the Church, the wings its virtues, and the shimmer of gold the beauty of charity.

Irony is a trope where the opposite of what is said is meant, often referred to as illusion, where not only is something different shown in words and meaning but the opposite, such as: "Now man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil," and: "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened"; also: "Hail, King of the Jews." Irony is recognized by its tone, for unless it carries a seriousness and bitterness, it seems to confess what it aims to deny.

Included under this is antiphrasis, which is the irony of a single word, such as: "war," because it is anything but peaceful; "grove," because it is hardly light; "Fates," because they are anything but sparing; thus: "Friend, why have you come?" Antiphrasis differs from irony in that irony indicates by tone alone what is meant to be understood, whereas antiphrasis signifies the opposite not by the tone of voice but by the words themselves, whose origins are contrary, as in Scripture: "Friend, why have you come?" and: "Unless he bless you to your face; Bless God and die," and: "Blessed God and the king," where to bless is an antiphrasis for to curse.

Also contained is sarcasm, which is a hostile form of irony full of scornful mockery, such as: "He saved others; he cannot save himself. If he is the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross,

and we will believe in him," and: "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him."

Periphrasis, or circumlocution, occurs when something that could be expressed in one or a few words is instead described with many words. This can be done for the sake of embellishment or to avoid mentioning something unpleasant. For embellishment, as in: "We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"; for avoiding unpleasantness, such as: "For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature"; similarly, Sacred Scripture always refers to the carnal union of man and woman in the most honorable terms: "Adam knew Eve his wife"; to "go in to a woman," to "cling to his wife," to "uncover a skirt or nakedness."

Hyperbaton is a form of transposition that disrupts the usual order of words through inversion or displacement. — Under hyperbaton is first included: synchysis, which is a completely jumbled hyperbaton, as in: "Your arrows are sharp, the peoples fall under you into the hearts of the king's enemies"; the order should be: "Your sharp arrows fall into the hearts of the enemies of the people under you"; and also in the Virgin's song: "He has helped his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever"; meaning: "remembering his mercy forever for Abraham and his seed," as per: "He remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel; he has helped his servant Israel," according to the Apostle: "He never helps angels, but he helps the seed of Abraham, as he spoke to our fathers."

Parenthesis is also contained under hyperbaton. Parenthesis is an interjected expression that divides a sentence, as in the Apostle's words: "Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who

know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?"

Anastrophe is a form of inversion involving only the words, as seen in phrases like: "Italiam contra" (towards Italy), "mecum" (with me), "tecum" (with you), etc.; as in the phrase: "Quamobrem ego deprecabor Dominum," meaning "For which reason I will pray to the Lord."

Hysterologia, or hysteron-proteron, is included here as well, and it involves altering the order of words to create a retrograde sequence, where what should precede is placed afterward, as in: "He shall receive blessing from the Lord and mercy from God his Savior"; mercy should have preceded because "the Lord first justifies the impious by showing mercy and then crowns the just by blessing."

Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement that exceeds the bounds of credibility, used either to amplify or minimize; for amplification, as when something is said to be "whiter than snow"; for minimization, as in "slower than a tortoise." In the Scriptures, we read: "Faster than the eagles of the sky, stronger than lions"; and: "Nightly I will wash my bed, I will drench my couch with my tears," and elsewhere: "They mount up to the heavens, they go down to the depths." Similarly, in minimizing: "The sound of a flying leaf will terrify you"; and: "Their face is blacker than a coal." Hyperbole is very frequent in Sacred Scripture, especially in universal statements, such as: "King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth"; yet, it refers only to the land of Israel. Often we read: "all the people," "the whole city," "all Israel"; it's hyperbolic, not literally every single one, but a great multitude is meant; just as when we read: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself"; and: "All nations... will come and worship before you, Lord"; "All the families of the nations"; it is a hyperbole, suggesting

a multitude, not an entirety, implying a vast number rather than every individual.

SECOND DISSERTATION ON SCHEMES, THAT IS, FIGURES OF SPEECH

A scheme, that is, a figure, as the name itself suggests, is "a certain configuration of speech and a disposition removed from the common and initially apparent manner". As we have said before, a scheme differs from a trope in that a trope always involves a shift in the use of words; a scheme, however, can occur with ordinary words, although speech is sometimes figured with altered words as well.

There are two kinds of figures: one pertains to meaning, the other to words. Following the path of ease, we will first discuss figures of words, and then those that pertain to the mind; although just as the nature of meaning precedes words, it would be proper to speak first about those that relate to meaning. There are several types within both these categories. The figures of words are of three kinds: some are made by addition, some by omission, and some by similarity. The figures that are made by addition are numerous.

The first of these is anaphora, which is also called epibole, and it involves the frequent repetition of the same word, as the discourse is often led by the same word, as seen in Cicero's speech against Catiline: "You do nothing, you plot nothing, you think nothing that I not only hear, but also see and clearly perceive." This figure is also called epanaphora, and is beautifully employed by Virgil:

"Here are cool springs, here soft meadows, Lycoris:

Here a grove, here I could spend an eternity with you."

Thus in Holy Scripture: Let Israel now say, that He is good, for His mercy endures forever; let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endures forever; let those who fear the Lord now say, etc.;

and again: It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to hope in the Lord than to hope in princes. A splendid example of anaphora is found in Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, when he commends charity above all other virtues: If I speak in the tongues of men, etc.; so it is also in David: The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is majestic, the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars. This figure is most commonly used in the Psalms and by Solomon in Ecclesiastes: To everything there is a season..., a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, etc.

Anadiplosis is a duplication or reduplication of expression, which appears at the end of a preceding sentence and at the beginning of the following one, as seen in Virgil:

"Let owls contend with swans: may Tityrus be Orpheus:

Orpheus in the woods, Arion among the dolphins."

Thus it is in this verse: Our feet were standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, built as a city; They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. — To this is joined epanadiplosis, which occurs when the same expression both opens and closes a sentence, as in Virgil:

"Much he asked about Priam, much about Hector."

Thus it is in this verse: God, who is like... you? Do not be silent, nor be still, O God. — Also added is analepsis, which is a repetition of a sentence to make a deeper impression on the listener's mind; thus it is said: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. — Here appears epizeuxis, which is a certain combination, when a word is combined without any intermediary, as seen in Virgil:

"Me, me; here am I who have done it";

thus it is said: Comfort, comfort my people; and that: Arise, arise, stand up, O Jerusalem. — Here too comes palilogy, which is a repeated utterance, when something is repeated for the sake of greater emphasis; thus it is said: Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall.

Polyptoton is a scheme where the same word is used in different cases or forms within the speech, as in this example: "He who has nothing in life more delightful than life itself, can he ever cultivate life with virtue?"; and in Virgil:

“Shores opposed to shores, waves fill with waves, arms against arms: let the descendants themselves fight.”

Similarly, the Apostle writes: The Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained righteousness, the righteousness that comes from faith; yet Israel, following the law of righteousness, did not reach the law of righteousness; and this: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God; for the end of the law is love leading to righteousness for everyone who believes; and this: For a woman who is under a husband is bound by the law to the husband while he lives; but if the husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband; and again: For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Him be glory forever. Similarly, in Isaiah: I will sing for my beloved a song of my cousin's vineyard: my beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill; he fenced it and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines, etc.; and in David: The mountain of God is a fertile mountain, a curdled mountain, a fertile mountain, why do you think, you curdled mountains? The mountain where it pleased God to dwell therein.

Synonymia is a scheme involving the use of synonymous terms, employed when a single word does not seem to adequately convey

the dignity or magnitude of the matter, as if one says: he afflicted, he overthrew, he struck down; and in Cicero: "He has gone, he has passed, he has broken out, he has escaped"; thus we read in David: "I will pursue my enemies and overtake them, and I will not turn back until they are destroyed. I will smash them so that they cannot stand; they will fall beneath my feet... And I will grind them to dust before the wind, I will wipe them out like mud in the streets. For by all these things the same is meant. So also: Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who are corrupters; and this: We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. Thus also: What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that You visit him? is the same; in Hebrew אדם, בן־אדם, איש, אנוש, and גבר all mean the same and are synonyms.

Polysyndeton is a scheme characterized by the abundance of conjunctions, where the speech is bound together with many conjunctions, as seen in Virgil:

"And the roof and the hearth,

And the arms and the dog from Amiclae and the Cretan quiver";

similarly in the Psalm: May the Lord preserve him and give him life and make him blessed in the land and not deliver him into the hands of his enemies.

Climax, or gradation, is a scheme in which the speech ascends step by step from one thing to another, as found in Ovid:

"He saw her and, having seen, desires, and, desiring, obtains the desired";

and in Cicero: "Africanus gained rivals by his industry, industry brought virtue, virtue brought glory, and glory brought rivals."

Similarly, in the Holy Page, by the Prince of the Apostles: "And to your faith supply moral excellence, and to moral excellence,

knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly affection, and to brotherly affection, love." Likewise, in Blessed James: Count it all joy, my brothers..., when you meet various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience, and let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Similarly, in Blessed Paul: We glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character, hope; and hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts.

The schemes that are formed by omission, sought for brevity and novelty, begin with ellipsis, which is also called synecdoche. Ellipsis involves the omission of a word in speech, which is sufficiently understood from the context. For example, in Terence's *Andria*, we read:

"One word, beware of the marriage";

the missing part would be: do not speak of it. This figure is not uncommon in Holy Scripture according to the Hebrew truth; indeed, it is peculiar and very common in the holy language that the verb 'to be' (am, are, is) often does not appear in speech and is rarely used, as is clear even to anyone with just a rudimentary understanding of that language. Besides this, this scheme is found elsewhere, as in the Holy Genesis: And Cain said to Abel...: Let us go out. In Hebrew, this is an ellipsis, for the words: Let us go out are not there. Thus, most understand it as: If anyone kills Cain, he will be punished sevenfold, implying an ellipsis in the middle and the sense being: If anyone kills Cain he will be punished; but Cain [will be punished] sevenfold, or seven times, since he is believed to have been killed in the seventh generation by Lamech. By this figure, we understand the passage in the Gospel: If anyone divorces his wife, except for

unchastity, and marries another, he commits adultery: a word is missing; there are two statements: If anyone divorces his wife, except for unchastity, he sins, because what... God has joined, man must not separate; but whoever, having divorced his wife, marries another, commits adultery.

This scheme differs from aposiopesis, which is a figure of speech involving sentences, in that in ellipsis, one word, clear and definite, is missing, while in aposiopesis, about which we will speak in its place, what is left unsaid is either uncertain or needs a more extended discourse to be explained.

Asyndeton, or dialyton, is a type of rhetorical device where, by omitting conjunctions from speech, statements are made in a disjointed manner. This can be seen in Virgil:

"Go, quickly bring the flames, set sails, push the oars";

and similarly in the Psalm: "Shout to God, all the earth, sing praises to His name, give glory to His praise; say to God: How terrible are your works, Lord." This figure sometimes appears solely in words, as in Cicero: "Let Gaul be under his protection, whose valor, faith, and fortune it is entrusted to"; and sometimes it is suitable in sentences, as in the same author: "These pursuits nourish youth, delight old age, adorn prosperity, provide refuge in adversity, are pleasing at home, do not impede abroad, stay with us through the night, travel with us, join us in the countryside." Similarly in Holy Scripture, just in words, as in James: "This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic; and again: The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy, etc. In sentences, however, as in the Apostle Paul: "Love is patient, love is kind; it does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, does not dishonor others, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, etc.

Protozeugma, or hypozeugma, is a type of syntactic construction where multiple clauses or phrases are linked to a single word, which can be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence. This structure occurs in three ways: either with the key word placed at the beginning, to which the rest of the sentence refers, as in: "Lust overcame shame, audacity overcame fear, madness overcame reason"; or with the key word placed at the end, as in: "Nor are you, Catiline, such that either shame could deter you from disgrace, or fear from danger, or reason from madness"; or with the key word placed in the middle of the sentence, as in:

"Born of Troy, interpreter of the gods, who feels the will of Phoebus, Who understands the tripods of Claros, the laurels, the stars, And the languages of birds and the omens of swift wings."

Clearly, in Holy Scripture according to the first mode, there is the Apostle's statement: Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come, and there will be men who are lovers of themselves, covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers; and that in the Law: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself. According to the second mode, there is the Apostle's statement: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you. In the third mode, it is written: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

Hypozeuxis is a rhetorical figure that contrasts with the previously mentioned structures, where each clause is distinct and each sentence is encapsulated in its own clause. As demonstrated in Cicero's statement: "The Colophonians claim Homer as their citizen,

the Chians assert he is theirs, the Salaminians demand him back, and the Smyrnaeans confirm he is theirs"; similarly in Virgil:

"He approached the king, and recounted to the king his name and lineage,

What he seeks, and what he himself brings, Mezentius' arms,

How he might win them over, and the fierce heart of Turnus

He explains: what trust there is in human affairs,

He advises, and mixes in his pleas: no delay occurs, Tarchon

Joins forces and strikes a treaty."

This is also seen in the Psalms: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers, etc.; and this: They will speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness; they will pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. Similarly, by the Apostle: Whether prophecies will be done away, tongues will cease, or knowledge will be destroyed. This scheme is frequently found in Holy Scripture.

There are also schemes of the third kind, which occur through similarity of words, or through parallel or contrasting structures to arouse emotions. The first of these is paronomasia, also known as annomination or a sort of denomination; for παρόνομα in Greek are the same as denominatives in Latin. This occurs when words are slightly altered and placed in the speech. Thus: The Lord is just and loves justice; the countenance of justice he beholds; and this: You are good, and in your goodness teach me your statutes. This figure is typically used by orators through similarity of words, as in Cicero: "What once was a most prosperous place will now be a most deserted grove, and the guardianship of the sacred will be regarded not as an honor, but as a burden." Similarly, in Terence:

"For the beginning is of madmen, not of lovers."

When it happens not from similarity of names but of words, it is called paromoion, as if someone were to say not "to pray" but "to plow". Isaiah elegantly used this scheme in his language when he said: I looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress. In Hebrew: for justice משפט he placed; for iniquity משפה; for righteousness צדקה; for outcry צעקה. Similarly, in the same language, a paromoion occurs when שכל, which means to act wisely and understand, and שכל, which means to act foolishly, are used.

Homoeoptoton, meaning "similarly ending," is a rhetorical scheme in which multiple phrases end in similar grammatical cases, even if the terms being declined are dissimilar. An example of this is: "deserving, weeping, lamenting, pitying"; and in Cicero: "He is the same Verres who has always been, bold in daring, and ready in listening"; and: "Who in these matters is not just defended as an ordinary praetor, but praised as the best general." Similarly in Holy Scripture: Lord, you have blessed your land, you have turned back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people; you have covered all their sin; and also: Sing, rejoice, and play music. And in Ezekiel: But if he begets a son who is a robber, a shedder of blood; and shortly after: Eating on the mountains and defiling his neighbor's wife, oppressing the poor and needy, committing robbery, not returning a pledge, lifting up his eyes to idols, doing abominable things, giving on usury and taking increase, will such a life live?

Homoeoteleuton, meaning "similarly ending," is a scheme where two or more sentences or clauses end in a similar way, that is, when parts of a speech conclude with a similar ending, such as: "It is not the same to act bravely and to live disgracefully"; in Cicero: "So that not only did citizens agree with his will, allies complied, enemies

obeyed, but even the winds and storms complied"; "Not only to extinguish his safety, but also the glory through such men to be extinguished." Thus in Holy Scripture in Ecclesiastes: It is better to see what you desire than to desire what you do not know; and again: It is better to be rebuked by a wise man, than to be deceived by the flattery of fools. This scheme differs from the previous in that it can appear in any part of a speech and can involve indeclinable words, and whereas homoeoptoton involves similarity in grammatical cases regardless of the dissimilarity of the terms, homoeoteleuton requires a similar ending in the actual words or phrases.

Isocolon, meaning "equal colon," is a rhetorical scheme in which elements of a speech are composed of approximately the same number of syllables, as seen in Cicero: "It appeared at the end of winter, was undertaken at the beginning of spring, was completed in mid-summer"; and again: "Lust overcame shame, audacity overcame fear, madness overcame reason." Similarly, in the Holy Scriptures, the Apostle says: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth; and: Love is from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; and in Moses: They are a nation without counsel, and without wisdom; oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

Antitheton, or contraposition, is a scheme where opposing concepts are contrasted, as in Ovid:

"Hot fought with cold, wet with dry, soft with hard, the weightless had weight."

Similarly, in Holy Scripture: The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength; those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the hungry have ceased to hunger; even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children is forlorn; The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up; The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low

and he exalts. Thus: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"; Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. This scheme is very common in Holy Scripture.

Antimetabole, or metathesis, meaning "exchange," is a scheme where two contrasting sentences are expressed in such a way that the latter derives from the opposite of the former, as in: "I do not live to eat, but I eat to live"; also: "If a poem is a speaking picture, then a picture is a silent poem." Similarly, in Holy Scripture: "You did not choose me, but I chose you"; and from the Books of the Maccabees 2: "It is not the place that sanctifies the people, but the people the place that God has chosen."

THIRD DISSERTATION ON THE SCHEMES OF SENTENCES

After the figures of words, the ornaments of sentences follow, which seem to possess a certain dignity not in the words, but in the matters themselves. The first of these is the erotēsis, or erotema.

Erotēsis, that is, interrogation, is a scheme whenever it is employed not for the purpose of asking but for pressing, as found in Virgil:

"Alas! which land now, he said, which seas can
Receive me?"

Also:

"What shall I do, or which earth now sufficiently deep
Might open for me?"

This scheme sometimes suits indignation, as in the same author:

"And does anyone [revere the divinity] of Juno?"

and wonder, as in:

"What do you not compel mortal hearts to do,
O accursed hunger for gold?"

This scheme is very frequent in Holy Scripture, in whatever manner it occurs: Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? Lord, why have those who trouble me increased? Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? "What shall I do, miserable me? Where shall I flee?" Where are their gods, in whom they trusted? A perverse and crooked generation, is this how you repay the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Indeed, whenever we read in Holy Scripture of God asking or inquiring

something, we must understand it to be an erotema. – There is also another inquiry, called exetasmōs, when we seek out multiple and various matters with questions, applying suitable answers to each, as in David: Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle, or who shall rest on your holy mountain? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right, etc.; similarly: Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, etc. – There is also another of this kind, called antipophora, when we answer an opposing question, only taking the statements and sentiments of adversaries to respond, as in this case: Many say: who will show us any good? The light of your countenance has been stamped upon us, Lord. This he added as a response, a divine light infused into the mind and reason.

Ethopoeia, or ethology, is the fictitious expression of the emotions and feelings of someone, a scheme expressed and described through words and the tone of voice of a person's habits and customs. From this comes the term ethopoeists and ethologists for actors who imitate the manners and gestures of the character they portray. This scheme is very common in Holy Scripture, which often introduces God in the form of an angry man, a repentant creature, a king, a judge, an old man, a groom, etc. Thus, Moses often in the Pentateuch, David in the Psalms, and the Prophets in their books, introduce God speaking or acting, and whatever is said about God through anthropopathy (ἄνθρωπο-πάθος) should be considered as pertaining to this scheme, and not to be taken literally, but figuratively; hence, the heretical Anthropomorphites were deceived and hallucinated, taking literally the things said about God through anthropopathy (ἄνθρωποπαθῶς), believing that God had a body and limbs of human form. – Closely related to this scheme and next in line is prosopopoeia, which differs only in that prosopopoeia can apply even to those things that do not exist, indeed, sometimes we

raise the dead and introduce them as speaking; whereas ethopoeia always attaches speech tailored to certain specific persons.

Prosopopoeia is the fictional introduction of characters, wherein we attribute personality and speech to inanimate objects, as seen in Cicero: "If my country, which is far dearer to me than my own life, if all Italy and the entire republic were to speak thus to me: 'Marcus Tullius, what are you doing?'" etc. This scheme is also very common in Holy Scripture. For example, in the Book of Judges, it figuratively states that the locusts are the woods coming to the fig tree, olive, and vine, and these responded. Similarly, the Prophet says: The rivers lift up, O Lord, the rivers lift up their voice. And Job says: The Abyss says: 'It is not in me,' and the sea says: 'It is not with me.' And again: Destruction and death said: 'We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.' And Wisdom cries out in Proverbs, speaking many things; Solomon in the Song of Songs introduces the Church under the guise of a bride and God under the guise of a bridegroom, engaging in many amorous conversations. The prophets very frequently clothe the nation of Israel and Judah in the garb of a woman, now as a bride and chosen virgin, now as a harlot and adulteress; and they introduce many speeches to these nations as if God were speaking to women, and these women speaking and responding to God in feminine attire. Isaiah also paints the entire people in the guise of a most wretched man, saying: The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Related to this scheme is something nearly identical called somatopoeia, that is, the fictitious embodiment. Somatopoeia involves the fictional embodiment of the body, attributing bodily shapes, forms, dispositions, and actions to incorporeal things, much like the wisest of the Egyptians used to teach many corporeal

matters through the tangible forms of hieroglyphics. So, indeed, we read in the Psalm: Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed each other; truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. And in Isaiah: And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the belt of his reins. Thus, God and the angels are often introduced in Holy Scriptures in the forms of various physical things, and in Proverbs, Wisdom is presented under the figure of a valiant woman when it is said: Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil, etc.

Another scheme that connects to the previous ones, albeit somewhat oppositely, is called antiprosopon, where something most favorable and best is substituted for the most ungrateful, as when we read about the crimes of Jacob, the sins of Israel, the iniquities of Judah, and similar matters; instead of the most wicked nation, the names of the holiest patriarchs are put forth.

Apostrophe, or turning away, is a rhetorical device where the speaker shifts from addressing one party to another, as in this example: "I now speak to you, Africanus, whose name brings glory and honor to the deceased city." It also occurs when the speech turns into an invocation. This scheme is very frequent in the Psalms, so there is no need to provide examples.

Hypotyposis, also known as description or characterismos, is a scheme in which a form of words is presented in such an expressive manner that it seems more visible than audible. This scheme aims to make visible the unseen, allowing them to be seen with the mind's eye, as in this example from Cicero against Verres: "He himself, inflamed with crime and fury, came into the forum; his eyes were ablaze, cruelty shone forth from his entire expression." This scheme is also frequent in Holy Writ, as in David: What is man, that you are

mindful of him? Or the son of man, that you visit him? You have made him a little lower than the angels, you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet. Also in another Psalm: The queen stands at your right hand in gold of Ophir, surrounded by variety.

Aposiopesis, meaning reticence or a certain cutting off of speech, is found in Virgil:

"Those men! But I'd better calm the troubled waves."

This device is common in the Hebrew of the Holy Scripture, as in Genesis, where our translation says: And Cain said unto Abel his brother, Let us go out; in Hebrew, there is an aposiopesis, as it omits "Let us go out." Similarly, in 2 Samuel, our translation states: David had offered... a reward to anyone who strikes down the Jebusite; the Hebrew text merely says: And David said: whoever strikes down the Jebusite; and nothing about a reward is mentioned there.

Emphasis, meaning expression or demonstration, occurs when one thing is drawn from another said, or there is an implication for understanding more than what is stated, because there is an underlying tacit significance in the words. There are two types of emphasis: one, in which more is signified than is said, as in the question: "Do you trust a Cretan?" where we understand the man to be deceitful in the manner of that nation's character, not merely because he was born in Crete; the other type, where even what is not said is implied, as in Virgil:

"When the acorns and the sacred wild strawberries

Began to fail in the forest",

which indicates that not only other forests but even the sacred ones were failing. Similarly, in Holy Scripture, it is said: Remember me in your mercy for your goodness' sake, O Lord; implying that he

asks for mercy not based on his own merits but because of God's goodness.

Epiphonema, or exclamation, is a rhetorical device where there is a sort of acclaim following a previously narrated and proven matter, as seen in Virgil:

"Such a great endeavor it was to found the Roman race!"

Similarly, the Royal Prophet, after speaking of the many wonders of God, exclaimed: The Lord has done whatever he pleased in heaven and on earth, in the sea and in all deep places.

Epanados, meaning return or repetition, is a scheme where we return to where we had just departed, as in the Psalm: The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back; the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ails you, O sea, that you fled? And you, Jordan, that you were driven back? Etc.

Anacoenosis, meaning communication, is a rhetorical device that involves consulting or questioning others as if seeking advice, as Cicero does: "Now, judges, I ask you, what do you think I should do?", etc.; similarly, in the Acts of the Apostles: "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God."

Ecphonisis, meaning exclamation, is a device that expresses pain, indignation, joy, or admiration through addressing a subject directly. This is frequently found in Cicero, for example, against Antony: "Oh, wretched me! Though my tears are spent, the pain still clings deep in my heart!" and against Rullus: "Oh, disturbed reasoning! Oh, lust to be restrained! Oh, plans disordered and lost!" and in Catiline: "O times, O customs! The Senate knows this, the consul sees this, yet this man lives," etc. Similarly, in Holy Writ, expressing pain, as in: "All you who pass by, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow!" And: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken

me?" Expressing indignation, as in Acts of the Apostles: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," etc. And expressing admiration, as in: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" Expressing joy, as in: "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with splendor!"

Deisis, meaning supplication or entreaty, is a device where we implore the help of someone, or induce someone to act through entreaty, as Cicero does for Deiotarus: "Therefore, by your faith, steadfastness, and mercy, free us from this fear, Gaius Caesar, that we might not suspect any residue of anger in you." This scheme is found throughout Holy Scripture, particularly in the Psalms, and the Apostle often encourages good deeds with entreaties: "I beseech you, brothers, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." To the Ephesians he also takes on an entreating tone: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called."

Linked to this is the scheme of wishing, which implies a desire, as Cicero expresses: "If only, Romans, we had such a plentiful supply of brave and innocent men!" And for Rabirius: "If only the case allowed me the opportunity to proclaim this!" In Holy Writ, the saints often take on the persona of one who wishes: "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Isaiah also says: "If only you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." And again: "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, to make your name known to your enemies."

Catara, meaning curse or malediction, is a rhetorical scheme in which dire destruction is wished upon someone, as in Cicero for Deiotarus: "May the gods destroy you, fugitive; for you are not only wicked and depraved, but also foolish and insane." This scheme is very common in Holy Scripture. We read a terrible imprecation in Jeremiah: Is evil recompensed for good? For they have dug a pit for my soul... Therefore deliver their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death, their young men be slain by the sword in battle, etc. We also read of detestation in Amos: The Lord God has sworn by his soul, says the Lord of hosts: I abhor the pride of Jacob, and hate his palaces, and I will deliver up the city with all that is therein.

Linked to this scheme is reproach, as in the Apostle's words: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" There are also other reproaches made by the Lord to those cities where many of his miracles were performed. — There are also many rebukes throughout all of Holy Scripture: "O perverse and crooked generation, is this how you repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your father who bought you, who made you and established you?" — Taunts against the wicked are also frequent, as in: "Where are their gods, in whom they trusted, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection;" and in Isaiah: "Where are now your wise men? Let them tell you and let them understand what the Lord of hosts has planned against Egypt."

Also, there are numerous threats in Holy Scripture to deter the wicked and restrain them from evil paths, such as these: "I will get comfort from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes." And in Isaiah: "Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! And particularly

harsh is this one by Moses in Deuteronomy: "They are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness. They have provoked me to jealousy with what is not God; they have angered me with their vanities; and I will provoke them to jealousy with those who are not a people; I will anger them with a foolish nation; a fire is kindled in my anger, and it will burn to the depths of Sheol, etc. Likewise: If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand takes hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to my adversaries, and will repay those who hate me; I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh: with the blood of the slain and the captives."

Sometimes, however, the prophets used the scheme of execration to show God rejecting something, even if it seems good, as in Isaiah: "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats... Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me; new moons and Sabbaths and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly."

Syncrisis, the same as antithesis, is seen in the Psalm where the Prophet says: "Destroy not my life with the wicked, O God, nor my life with the men of blood, in whose hands are iniquities; their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, I will walk in my integrity." This shows the contrasting comparison between the wicked and himself, highlighting his righteous cause.

FOURTH DISSERTATION ON THE MULTIPLE SENSES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

The sacred and divinely bestowed wisdom, which the Holy Spirit, inspiring the holy men of God, has deigned to impart to us, abounds with such a rich vein not only of mystical and arcane senses but also of more familiar and manifest riches, that like an immense sea, it is always inexhaustible and seems like a never-ending abyss that cannot be bounded, but always affords the broadest scope for exploration. It has thus far exercised the talents of the most illustrious men, who have not spared effort in elucidating it, and also of the more recent ones who have undertaken to explain this domain, afflicting them with many labors, though not unsuccessfully; but it has also left quite a few things to be worked out and discovered by posterity. Because it is divinely inspired, it surpasses the brilliant minds of even the most skilled men, as much as these men are inferior to the word of God, which is the lofty source and perpetual origin of this wisdom. Hence it is that the Holy Scripture under one simple text holds many and multiple senses, both manifest and hidden, and arcane; because since its author is God, who comprehends everything simultaneously with His intellect, the holy men of God, as far as they drank from the most sacred fount of divine intellect, the streams of Sacred Sayings, have thus spoken to us and handed down these teachings in their writings. For it was first derived from the divine intellect and its wisdom through forms divinely impressed upon them, as from an inexhaustible and perennial spring, imbuing their minds dedicated to God and illuminated by divine light; and through them, it has flowed down to us, who read in the book of Holy Scripture those very things which they first imbibed.

Therefore, as we are about to diligently investigate the various and multiple senses of Holy Scripture, we first lay down, as a foundation, that there are two types of understanding of Sacred Writings: one literal and more manifest; the other spiritual, mystical, and more secret. Regarding these, the great Dionysius the Areopagite says that there are two traditions among theologians: one arcane and mystical, the other manifest and more familiar; and one indeed is significative and perfective, the other eager for wisdom and demonstrative. Therefore, Holy Scripture is said to be a book written inside and out, as we read in Ezekiel: "Behold, a hand was sent to me in which was a wrapped scroll, and he spread it before me, and it was written inside and out"; and in Revelation: "I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a book written inside and out." The external scripture is the understanding of the letter; the interior, however, is the arcane and mystical sense.

However, the reason for this dual understanding is as follows. For Holy Scripture is attributed not only the sense that the words themselves signify, which is common to any sciences: but also the things signified by the words represent something else, which is peculiar to Sacred Writings. For God, their author, not only finely tunes words to signify, but also makes the very things themselves signify other things. Therefore, that signification, which pertains to the words themselves, produces the former understanding; whereas the latter, which pertains to the things, engenders the latter understanding. By the most orderly disposition of God and with the most fitting reasoning, it has been arranged that the Holy Scriptures, endowed and inspired with this dual intellect, in the mysteries of their own secrets, enriched by the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and by the incomprehensibility of God's judgments and the unsearchability of His ways, are always delivered most hidden and profound, lest the sacred mysteries suffer indignity from the unworthy. For it is sacrilegious, as the Sacred Sayings

testify, to throw the inestimable price of spiritual pearls and immense riches before swine to be trampled under their feet.

Furthermore, it is fitting that Holy Scripture speaks in such a way that the literal text, with the humility and simplicity of its expression, is accessible to all; that it may nourish the small with humble speech, feed the great with truth, mock the proud and the wise among men with its depth, and finally terrify all who are attentive and continually engage and exercise their study. For the depth of Christian writings is such that we can daily progress in them if, from early age to decrepit old age, we endeavored to learn them alone with great leisure, utmost diligence, and the best intellect. For there remain so many things so shadowed with the umbra of mysteries to be understood, both in the words by which these things are spoken and in the matters to be understood, in which the depth of wisdom hides, that it happens to the oldest, sharpest, and most ardently desirous of learning, as the same Scripture says in a certain place: "When a man has finished, then he begins." For as we consider the understanding of Holy History in a certain loftiness of sense, the same senses, as they begin to be considered more subtly and brought forth, generate others more numerous and subtle; the depths of mysteries are also concealed in Sacred Writings lest they become commonplace, but are continuously sought, to exercise and eventually to be revealed, to nourish. For the depth of the Word of God so exercises study that it does not deny understanding. For not all is closed up, that there might be nothing from which the obscure are revealed, but in some places of Scripture we are exercised to seek, and again by some manifest places we are enlightened to see and may find the obscure things we seek, that from them we may be sweetly nourished.

Origen offers another fitting analogy for this dual understanding, saying: "Just as in the last days the Word of God, clothed in the flesh of Mary, proceeded into this world, and there was one thing that was

seen in Him, and another that was understood — for the aspect of the flesh in Him was evident to all, but the recognition of divinity was given only to a few and the chosen —; so too, since through the Prophets or the Lawgiver the Word of God is brought forth to men, it is not presented without fitting documents. For just as there the flesh, so here the letter is covered by a veil: the letter indeed may be seen as the flesh, but the hidden inner sense felt as divinity."

Having established this dual sense of Scripture, it now behooves us to explain what is meant by the literal sense, and what by the spiritual and mystical. The literal sense, therefore, we call that which the author of the Scripture intended to signify through the words or names, whether taken literally or metaphorically, whether recounting an event that has occurred or is to occur, indicating faith and demonstrating truth, commanding or forbidding and instructing in morals, or attracting with promises or shaking the hearts of men with threats and terrors. The mystical or spiritual sense, however, is that which the Holy Spirit intended to signify in the deeds done or to be done. But before we move to the explanation of the mystical sense, the literal sense must be elucidated and declared to us.

We thus say that the literal sense is not solely that which is signified by words and names taken in their proper sense, such that those designated by words and names taken metaphorically are considered spiritual and mystical; but rather, the literal sense is that which is first asserted by the Holy Spirit through words and names, whether taken literally or metaphorically. Hence, the parabolic sense or metaphoric sense or any sense conveyed through irony, hyperbole, enigma, or any other tropes or figurative expressions, which are not to be understood literally but where one thing is understood from another, should be regarded as pertaining to the literal sense; otherwise, many passages of Holy Scripture would be left without a literal sense, and indeed would be called lies and unlearned fables. For example, when in the Book of Judges we read that Jotham stood

on Mount Gerizim and said: "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" And the other things that are said there about the fig tree, the vine, and the bramble. Who would not judge these to be vain and foolish fables if they were understood literally as they stand? But these trees are the men of Shechem, as he himself explained. Similarly, in other parables and tropic expressions and in the many schemes of Holy Scripture found scattered everywhere.

Therefore, the literal sense is that which is primarily intended by the author, whether the expression is simple or tropic. Hence, it is recognized that the literal sense can be manifold: one according to history, another according to etiology, another according to analogy, and finally one according to allegory, whether tropic or figurative expression. According to history, when the narrator describes what has been done or will be done, or what has not been done or should not be done; according to etiology, when it is shown why something was done or said; according to analogy, when it is demonstrated that the two Testaments, Old and New, do not contradict each other; according to allegory, when it is taught that certain things that are written should not be taken literally but understood figuratively. In these ways, our Lord Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and the other Saints, the writers of the Holy Scriptures, have used.

For example, in history, the account taken when Christ was objected to because His disciples had plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath: "Have you not read," He said, "what David did when he was hungry?" etc. — In etiology, it pertains to when Christ commanded that a wife should not be divorced except for the cause of fornication, and it was objected by the questioners that Moses had allowed divorce by a written decree: "Moses allowed this because of the hardness of your hearts," Christ said. Here the reason is given

why it was well permitted by Moses at that time. — In analogy, where the consistency of both Testaments is clear, it is evident in many places when the Apostles and Evangelists bring up Old Testament testimonies to prove various mysteries of the New Covenant. — In allegory, it is sporadically seen throughout the Holy Scripture in parables, metaphors, enigmas, and other schemes and tropic expressions.

Indeed, since the parabolic sense is a principal and very frequent one in Holy Scripture, we deemed it worthwhile to discuss it in detail. A parable is a comparison or analogy between different things, from which comparison the matter intended to be explained is understood more clearly and agreeably; the Greek term "παραβολή" corresponds to the Latin "similitudo," meaning similitude. In the Holy Scriptures, parables are used when the author of Scripture intends to hint at something in spiritual and divine matters through certain symbolic comparisons, which the Holy Spirit composed in the Divine Sayings, so that we might more easily grasp heavenly things through bodily likenesses. For as St. Dionysius the Areopagite attests, it is impossible for us to perceive the "divine ray" unless it is shrouded in a variety of sacred veils.

However, the parabolic sense is not what the words taken parabolically express, but what the bringer of the parable intends to express under its veil and symbol, as when it is said, "A certain man made a great supper, etc.," and "The sower went out to sow, etc." The literal sense is not what is narrated in those stories as history, but what Christ, expounding the parables, explained. Thus, every parable reveals the nature of something in a tropic and symbolic manner.

Indeed, it is not required that a parable closely and completely resemble the thing for which it was chosen; in fact, it is sometimes drawn from completely dissimilar things. For instance, when Christ

wished to teach us that we ought to pray continually and never give up on prayer, especially to overcome enemies and to seek just revenge from adversaries, He used the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. This judge, although he neither feared God nor respected men, was eventually overcome by the widow's persistence and yielded to her continuous entreaties, thus securing her justice against her adversaries. Is God then similar to the unjust judge? Certainly not. What this parable suggests is that God does not disdain the prayers of the supplicants, that He ultimately hears them and grants the petitioners their desires.

Therefore, in interpreting parables, it is not appropriate to meticulously examine each part or to be overly anxious about every single word; rather, once the intended message of the parable is understood, those parts that seem useful for the purpose should be explained. Other details should not be scrutinized curiously but should be disregarded as contributing nothing to the main purpose, only serving to weave the parable together. According to St. Augustine, not everything reported in a narrative must be assumed to signify something; rather, for the sake of those elements that do signify something, those that do not are also included. This is like a plow used for cultivating the land; although the soil is only cut by the plowshare, other parts of the plow are necessary for this to happen. Similarly, in musical instruments like lyres, only the strings are tuned to produce sound, but other components are necessary for the strings to be fitted and functional, though they are not struck by the players.

Just as in paintings and statues, the likenesses do not correspond in every detail to the things they represent, whether in a flat image without relief or in a statue with relief, but not internally. Thus, when the kingdom of heaven is said to be like something, it is likened not according to all aspects present in the thing to which the

comparison is made, but only to certain aspects that are relevant to the point being made.

It should be noted that parables are presented in multiple ways: sometimes through the use of a similarity or comparison, such as: "The kingdom of heaven is like," found in many places; sometimes through adverbs of similarity: like, just as, as, like, as if; examples of this type include: "Let my teaching drop as the rain," "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior," "He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water," "As the deer pants for streams of water," "Who are these that fly like a cloud, and like doves to their windows?" and similar expressions. Sometimes, however, they are presented in such a way that the similarity is not expressed, but only the parable; examples include: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit," "In those days the mountains will drip sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk and honey," "Let the mountains receive peace for the people and the hills righteousness." This type is very common in the parables of Solomon, and Christ often spoke to the crowds in such parables, which He later explained separately to His disciples. An example of this type from the Gospel is: "If your eye, or your hand, or your foot causes you to stumble, etc.;" for it is a figurative expression.

Having thus discussed the literal sense, let us now move to the spiritual and mystical sense. The hidden and mystical understanding of Holy Scriptures, which is based on the literal sense, is threefold: tropological, allegorical, and anagogical. Insofar as the Sacred Page narrates the deeds of men, either righteous and holy or wicked and unjust, presenting us with examples of what to do and what to avoid for just and holy living, this is the tropological sense; insofar as the events narrated in the Old Testament serve as types and figures of what are in the New Testament concerning Christ and the Church, since "all these things happened to them as examples," as the Apostle says, this is the allegorical sense; and insofar as what

happens now in the Church are representations of heavenly realities, this is the anagogical sense. We must discuss each of these in the order we have proposed.

The tropological sense of Sacred Scriptures is when we apply the Divine Sayings to reforming, correcting, and instructing human behavior, as when it is said: "Let your garments always be white, and let not oil be lacking on your head;" that is, let your deeds be pure and let charity never fade from your mind. Similarly, when we interpret the story of Lot to denounce drunkenness and luxury, or the story of Peter weeping bitterly to commend the tears of penitents, which cleanse the soul from the stains of sin, here the tropological or moral sense, which is the same, as *τρόπος* in Greek signifies both a way and a method as well as life and manners, is very close to the literal sense. Often, indeed very often, the historical narrative itself casually indicates what contributes to good morals; hence, history very often carries tropology with it, like some kind of image or statue painted, crafted, or skillfully made with the utmost care and diligence, which simultaneously shows both the work and what is excellent and worthy of admiration and imitation to all observers. For example, when the story of Abraham hospitably receiving three men is told, hospitality, fervent charity, and humility are commended to us; and when, at God's command, he offers his only and most beloved son as a burnt offering, it is clearly demonstrated that we must obey God in all things, even in the most difficult and challenging.

Moreover, the tropological sense follows the literal sense so closely that in many places in Scripture, the very literal sense is the tropological sense, as in: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength... and your neighbor as yourself." All the commandments of the Decalogue and many places in Scripture where morals are instructed, especially those found in the books of

Wisdom, in the Gospels, and the writings of the Apostles, and in almost the entire sacred Canon, as the end of the commandment is charity, which pertains to practice.

Now, concerning the allegorical sense. Allegory is a manner of speech in which words are used in a sense different from their original meaning to signify something else, or through the things properly signified, we understand something different. The term "allegory" thus indicates that it conveys one thing through words and another through meaning; hence the Greek term *ἀλληγορία* can be translated into Latin as inversion.

It's important to note that allegory is not simple but dual: one type pertains to figurative speech and is a species of trope, properly called inversion; for a trope, according to the meaning of words, is a change of a word or discourse from its original significance to another with effect. This type of allegory relates to the literal understanding and is what we have set forth above and included in the earlier part of our exposition. – The other type of allegory pertains to the hidden, more secretive, and mystical meaning, which is contained in the latter part of our description and occurs when in the matters first understood in the meaning of words, which understanding is first intended by the author, the Holy Spirit intends us to understand something else in and through them. The Apostle gives an example of this mystical understanding, saying: "It is written... that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman; and the one born according to the flesh was from the slave woman, while the one from the free woman was through promise," which things are said allegorically. For the Apostle relates these to the two Testaments. Thus, when Sacred Scripture narrates that Abraham had two sons, the entire connected narrative pertains to the literal sense, with words taken in their proper sense; but if through what is said, the two Testaments are understood, then it is a mystical allegory. The same can be said of the stories of Abel and

Cain, of Noah, the Ark, and the Flood; for Abel represents a type of Christ, while the Ark symbolizes the Church.

In dealing with allegories, it is essential and absolutely necessary to firmly maintain the truth of the historical narrative; therefore, a true foundation of the literal meaning must first be established, so the allegory does not rest on a false foundation. The entire structure of the allegory will collapse if the truth of the historical narrative is not firmly held, as in the stories of the earthly paradise, the flood and the ark, Joseph sold by his brothers, Samson, David and Goliath, and the story of Jonah, etc. Upon these, multiple and beautiful allegories can be founded, but the truth of the historical narrative must always be maintained. It is permissible for each individual to form an allegory above the letter, provided it is congruent with piety and does not conflict with another passage of Scripture; it is best if it can be confirmed through another Scripture passage. However, care must be taken not to force the allegory to fit the text in a strained manner, but it should align most harmoniously with the narrative; it is improper to present a forced, violent, and distorted allegory.

Furthermore, it is not necessary to allegorize every detail mentioned in the historical account, but only those elements sufficient to explain the intended allegorical meaning should be taken. For example, when the Apostle refers the two sons of Abraham to the two Testaments, we cannot minutely interpret everything said in that history allegorically to this meaning; and when discussing Adam and Eve to the Ephesians he says: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church," we are not compelled to refer the entire beginning of Genesis and the creation of the world and human condition to Christ and the Church through allegory. Similarly, when the same Apostle says, "They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ," we are not obliged to refer the

entire book of Exodus to Christ; each passage will receive a different spiritual understanding according to its distinct historical context. Now, let us ascend to the anagogical sense.

The anagogical sense leads to higher things; it is named from the Greek words *ἀνά*, meaning "above," and *γωγή*, meaning "leading." This sense arises when we interpret passages of Sacred Scripture as figures and mysteries of the celestial sanctities, elevating the soul towards heavenly bliss. For example, when we read about Enoch, the seventh from Adam, being taken from the world, we understand it as a sign of the Sabbath of future bliss, reserved for the elect after the good works of this world, which are completed over six ages. Similarly, the sanctification of the seventh day and rest from all servile work lifts our minds to the most blissful and blessed rest in the supreme God of eternal blessedness.

Likewise, in the story of the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, into which the children of Israel entered after a long and arduous journey through hot and barren deserts, we understand it as the land of the living in heaven, promised to us after the many labors, sufferings, and struggles of this present life. Also, in the story of the earthly paradise, we interpret it as a paradise of eternal and unfading delights and pleasures. Thus, anagogy lifts the mind to celestial and divine realms.

These four senses of Sacred Scripture—literal, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical—are often found in the same text. For example, when we read about water, we understand it literally as one of the four elements, as in "Let the waters be gathered into one place." In the tropological sense, water represents tribulations, as expressed by the Prophet inspired by the Divine Spirit: "We went through fire and water, and you brought us to a place of refreshment," and "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my soul." Allegorically, the term water denotes the most holy

sacrament of Baptism, as the astonishing Prophet shows with those words: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses." Allegorically, it also signifies grace and charity, as in: "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Finally, in the anagogical sense, water represents eternal beatitude, as in Jeremiah: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Thus, in the anagogical sense, it also represents the Holy Spirit, as in: "Whoever believes in me... out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." This he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive.

Literal Sense: Jerusalem refers to a certain city in Palestine, which was first built by Melchizedek, then expanded and fortified in a remarkable way by Solomon.

Tropological Sense: Jerusalem signifies the faithful soul, in which, by grace, there is a vision of peace, that is, the contemplation of eternal things, about which it is said: "Praise, Jerusalem, the Lord; praise your God, Zion." And through Isaiah, it is said: "Shake off your dust, arise, sit down, Jerusalem; free the chains from your neck, captive daughter of Zion, for you have been sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money."

Allegorical Sense: It expresses the Church Militant, such as: "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Anagogical Sense: Finally, in the anagogical sense, it represents the triumphant Church, as: "But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother."

In this way, the Temple in Sacred Scripture, according to history, is the house of God built by Solomon; tropologically, however, each of the faithful is said to be God's temple, as: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you?" Through allegory, however, it represents the body of Christ, about which he said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," but he spoke of the temple of his body; or the Church of God, as: "The temple of God is holy, which temple you are." Through anagogy, however, it expresses the dwelling of heavenly joy, aspired to by the one who says: "Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord; they will praise you forever;" thus it is said: "The Lord in his holy temple, the Lord, his throne is in heaven."

We have recognized these fourfold genres of expositions according to the fourfold understanding, observed by Christ and the Apostles and demonstrated to us, as the Scripture testifies; historical, as when the Lord came to Nazareth and entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day according to custom, and had explained the prophecy of Isaiah and the Nazarenes marveled and said: Is not this the son of Joseph? The Lord replied, saying: Surely you will say this proverb to me: physician, heal yourself: as many things as we heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your hometown. Or else: Truly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in the days of Elijah in Israel, when the heavens were shut for three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout the land; and Elijah was sent to none of them, except to Sarepta of Sidon to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel under the prophet Elisha; and none of them were cleansed, save Naaman the Syrian. All this was brought by the Lord from history.

The Lord used the tropological sense when, narrating the history of the Ninevites and the arrival of the queen of the South to Solomon, He rebuked the utterly corrupt morals of the Jews: The men of

Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

He gave an example of allegorical exposition when, speaking to the Jews, He said about John the Baptist: Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished; for Elijah himself is John. By these words, He meant to signify that Elijah in the Old Testament represented a type of John, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah.

The most manifest use of anagogical exposition was by St. Paul to the Hebrews, when he relates the land promised to the patriarchs of the Palestinians to the promise of divine glory; thus he says: By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going; by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; where he shows that the land, so greatly desired by the Patriarchs and sought after through so many wanderings, is not the present visible and earthly region of Canaan, but the future invisible and heavenly homeland, having better foundations, whose architect is God, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free, which is our mother, adorned with myriads of angels, for they knew that they did not have a permanent city here, therefore they sought one to come.

Finally, one thing must be noted here that on the same letter, multiple mystical meanings can be formed; as in the story of the

Garden of Delights; for that garden is a type of both the Church militant and the Church triumphant, and therefore, both allegorical and anagogical senses are founded upon it. Likewise, manna is a type of the Lord's body, of the Gospel word, of grace and charity; David defeating Goliath is a type of Christ conquering the devil and of the righteous man subduing the pride of the flesh. Similarly, it must be said of the stories of Samson, the promised land, the city of Jerusalem, the ark and the tabernacle, the temple of the Lord, etc.; from which various mystical and arcane understandings are derived. Indeed, often diverse and opposite spiritual understandings are taken from the same passage. For the lion signifies both Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah that prevails, and the devil, who prowls around seeking whom he may devour like a roaring lion; and the sheep sometimes signifies the innocent and just man, sometimes Christ and the Saints and the Elect; and sometimes the foolish and sinner, wandering like the sheep that is lost. Thus, the serpent sometimes represents prudence, but at other times detestable sin; and the bronze serpent raised up in the wilderness prefigured Christ to be exalted on the cross. Likewise, the birds of the air are sometimes taken in a good sense and sometimes in a bad one. This happens because of the multiple and diverse properties found in one and the same thing, from which mystical understandings are derived. And let this suffice to be said about the multiple senses of Sacred Scripture.

But those who intend to handle these sacred senses of the Divine Scriptures should properly begin with prayer so that the Holy Spirit, by whom the holy men of God spoke, may deign to be present with us, that, guided by Him, we may attain the same senses that He intended to be comprehended in the Scriptures, lest following the fantasies of our own head, we stray from the aim of truth and sincerity. For there are many things in Sacred Scripture which have so much obscurity that they cannot be fully and clearly explained by any human ingenuity; like the descriptions of the wheels in Ezekiel,

and also the temple in the Apocalypse of Saint John; to fully understand these, the same Spirit is needed who illuminated the Prophets to describe them. Therefore, prayer is necessary for us to understand Sacred Scripture.

DISSERTATION FIVE ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD IN TIME

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. This is the first dogma, the first thesis, the first axiom of the divine theosophy of Moses: the world is not eternal, but at some time began, authored and created by God, and created from nothing. Indeed, this was highly controversial among the ancient and old philosophers, and was contested and agitated through great disputes and astonishing duels, with some affirming it, and others denying it.

And Aristotle, along with almost his entire school of Peripatetics, believed the world to be eternal and vehemently and bitterly criticized those ancient philosophers who thought otherwise. Plato, however, who is rightfully called divine, followed the opinion of venerable antiquity, denied eternity, and firmly established, along with all the old philosophers who preceded him, the birth and beginning of the world and the age. Plato especially adhered to the traces of the most ancient Zoroaster and Trismegistus; these are indeed considered the oldest and most venerable. The former flourished in wisdom among the Persians many years before the Trojan War; the latter among the Egyptians; whom afterwards all of Greece admired and revered as the fathers of philosophy and theology. After them, Linus of Chalcis and Orpheus of Lebetria flourished, who were followed many years later by Homer and Hesiod, who all taught that the world was created. Following these were Thales of Miletus, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Xenophanes, Melissus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Leucippus, and Democritus, Pythagoras with his followers Empedocles, Archytas, Timaeus, Philolaus, and others; and finally, Plato with all these taught the creation of the world, this world's making.

Aristotle alone among the philosophers who survive, denies this and has attempted, using all the strength of his arguments—and not to say by the deceits of sophistry—to establish the eternity of the world; he stands as another Ishmael, against all and all against him. For he waged war not only against all the ancient philosophers, not just the Greeks, but also against the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Persians, Egyptians, and Hebrews, indeed against all nations entirely; for it is confessed by all that the world began at some time by the authorship of God. From this indeed arises all piety towards God and every sacred and venerable religion; this dogma and the common conception of all minds is the foundation and basis of divine worship and all virtues, the entirety of uprightness. Just as children are pious and obedient to their parents insofar as they recognize that they are born and raised by them, seeing generation as the root of children's piety towards their parents: similarly, from the creation of all things and from worldly governance and providence, the piety, religion, and worship of God the Greatest and Best have arisen. There is no one who, having contemplated this worldly mechanism of the heavens and earth, and the structure of their own body and the divinity of the soul, and recognizing them as created by God, does not marvel at the creator's power, wisdom, goodness, supreme mercy and majesty, and venerates, adores, and worships him; but with the removal of the creation of the world, all religion and all righteousness collapse, like a lofty tree uprooted or a high structure with its foundations removed. For no one will perform dutiful service to their parents, by whom they were brought into the world, unless they recognize and believe them to be truly their parents; nor will anyone honor a king, unless they consider him to be their lord and king. Therefore, the eternity of the world is a kind of inexplicable impiety, the destruction of all virtues, the ruin of all religion, the death of all piety, and the head of all crimes and outrages, the original and primeval root.

Therefore, Aristotle, by establishing the eternity of the world, destroyed all piety, laid the eggs of all impieties, and set their foundations; yet many followed him, deluded by the deceits of his sophisms and deceived by the masks of his arguments, those who, philosophizing more the persona of Aristotle, whom they call the supreme philosopher and the prince of all philosophers, than his doctrine, follow him and stubbornly hold and defend his errors with all their might. His followers consider his sophistical arguments and paralogisms to be unbreakable, most firm, and most certain, more so than mathematical truths themselves. But come now, let us examine these proofs and arguments of his, with which his disciples believe Moses and all the ancient philosophers, who followed his divine dogmas, to have been thoroughly skewered and transpierced with double-edged and sharpest daggers.

Aristotle's thesis, then, is that the world is eternal, a theorem he tries to prove by the eternity of the heavens, which all the ancients denied. He proves this with certain techniques and the monsters of sophisms. First: by the eternity of motion; second: by the nature of the heavens, free from all contrariety and decay; third: from the etymology of aether, which says that the sky is called 'aether' from 'eternal motion'; fourth: from the opinion of the ancients, who placed the divine and eternal in the heavens, and where the eternal gods have their everlasting abode; finally: from ancestral memory, which does not record that the divine body of the heavens ever suffered, changed, or was destabilized. Of these, he claims the first two are the most powerful and of the highest strength, and to those enchanted by them and poisoned with Circean venom, they appeared to be invincible Achilles, though they are truly Thersites.

But, I ask, is the eternity of motion evident? Aristotle himself tried to construct this with many devices and schemes, since its nature is not evident on its own, from the eternity of the mover, the shape of the heavens, the circulation of motion, the infinity of time. From the

mover indeed; because if the mover is eternal, he argues, so is the movable; therefore the heavens and motion are eternal. But I say: how is the eternity of the mover established? We indeed say that God is eternal, as everyone admits, but not that the mover is eternal. Yet he proves the eternity of the mover from the eternity of motion, which is a manifest circular reasoning and inadequate proof. - Then, by what necessity does it follow that if the mover is eternal, the movable must also be eternal? His followers claim that from the eternal nothing but the eternal can proceed. However, I do not know if this is true; indeed, I think it utterly false. For the daily light in our hemisphere is from the eternal sun, but it is not eternal; it fades with the coming of night. Today's rotation from east to west is from an eternal mover, but it is not eternal: tomorrow another rotation will occur. As the sun moves from the southern signs to the northern, many things are generated from incorruptible and eternal matter; but as it departs, they perish. Therefore, this reasoning is no stronger than a broken reed. Thus, the eternity of the world, based and supported on such a weak foundation and base, must necessarily collapse; for that reasoning, which hunts for the eternity of the mover from motion, is of no weight; for we think the heavens are moved not by some other, but by their own nature and their own form, as heavy things move downward and light things upward, not by an external mover. Furthermore, the proposition that everything that is moved is moved by another is clearly seen to be false from the movement of light and heavy things; and yet this candid discourse rests as if on a foundation.

However, the Peripatetic school considers the argument from the shape of the heavens to be very strong, asserting that in a circle it is not possible to definitively designate a beginning, middle, or end; therefore, neither can circular motion, which occurs in a circle, have a beginning or end. And what does not have a beginning or an end, is eternal. But I ask, are the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, the

earth, and all bodies of spherical and circular shape infinite, just because they do not definitively have a beginning, middle, or end? Who in their right mind would say this? Clearly, if I draw a circle with a compass, and once the circle is completed, the ends of the circular line are connected, there would not be a definitive beginning or end. Therefore, does it not have one? Likewise, a potter's wheel moves in rotation. So does that motion not have a beginning or end? Must it be considered perpetual and eternal, because it is of a spherical or circular shape?

Someone might say this is artificial, but the heavens are a natural body. Yet indeed, not having a definitive beginning or end is not a characteristic of this or that natural or artificial circle, but of the circle universally, just as having three angles is not the characteristic of this or that triangle, but universally of triangles. This motion either suits the heavens because it is the heavens, or because it is circular. If because it is the heavens, then any other shape should suit it as well; if truly because it is circular, then it must necessarily suit any body given that shape; therefore, the earth also, since it is of this shape, is moved by perpetual motion. A circular body can also not be moved circularly at all; for a ball thrown upwards or downwards, although it is spherical in shape, is not moved in a circle, but in a straight motion as if it were of any other shape. Therefore, the circular shape provides no help to Aristotle in asserting the eternity of motion.

If someone argues that a spherical body is naturally suited to perpetual motion because it lacks extremes where motion could start or end, unlike those that move in a straight line, which have a center and circumference, up and down, and in the eternal, to be and to be able to are the same: we grant these indeed, but we deny the eternity of the heavens; we also grant this suitability to a spherical body, but it is also clear that the earthly globe is spherical and can move, yet it never moves in a sphere.

Aristotle benefits even less when he tries to prove the eternity of motion from the motion of circulation. He wants this to be continuous and never failing because it occurs in a continuous magnitude, that is, one that does not have an actual beginning and end, like a straight line: this is indeed the difference between straight and circular motion; because it also does not move from one opposite to another like straight motion; but these same things could also be said of the motion of a potter's wheel, mill wheels, and celestial globes and circles in an astrolabe, and also of the motion of the wheels of any clock. For the motion of a clock is continuous: it occurs continuously in place and time; it has no opposite because it does not move up and down, but in a circle. If someone calls this motion artificial, and the motion of the heavens natural and therefore perpetual, I will say: either this motion is perpetual because it is natural, or because it is circular; if because it is natural: then every natural motion should be perpetual, thus also the straight motion of the elements; if because it is circular: then every circular motion should be perpetual, thus of any globe as well.

If someone claims that the nature of a spherical body is both circularly mobile and perpetually in motion, as is its nature, then it must be proven that this nature is perpetual and never began. But if this is proven by motion, it is a manifest circular argument. Yet he says: things must either be eternal or have come into existence when they did not exist. Indeed, we say they were created, with God as the author, along with Moses and all the ancients. But he says: motion is the act of a movable object as long as it is movable. If motion began at some point, a movable object in rest pre-existed; but rest is the deprivation of motion: therefore, motion always preceded motion. But I ask, what does it mean that a movable object pre-existed motion? How did it pre-exist? By nature or in time? If the movable pre-existed motion in time: how then is motion eternal? If by nature, as substance is naturally prior to accident, indeed the movable pre-

exists; but what of it? Therefore, was there rest before motion? How does that follow? Perhaps because substance is naturally prior to its accidents, was it sometimes without its natural accidents? Hence, the heavens were once not a body, since magnitude is an accident and the substance is later; but we perceive by sense itself, and see more clearly than light with our eyes in the flame of fire, which is generated simultaneously and moves upward, and in whatever things are movable by their own nature and form.

Regarding the deduction from this thesis that the movable precedes motion, leading to: before the first motion there was rest, and rest is the deprivation of motion: therefore, before the first motion there was motion; let's see if this follows truly. Rest is the deprivation of motion: therefore, there was motion before? What kind of inference is this? Clearly, sense itself shows that not every deprivation follows a preceding condition, like death, sickness, blindness, but also that deprivation can precede a condition, which he himself counted among the principles of natural things. He himself placed deprivation before all natural generable forms, as when from non-man a man is made, for it comes from the seed, in which there is no form of man; is this deprivation of a preceding form? Is it not of a subsequent one? What then is the force of this inference: rest is the deprivation of motion: therefore, motion preceded? I could also say: The Earth rests by its own nature: therefore, it once moved by its own nature. The matter of the Earth is deprived of the form of the heavens and the sun: therefore, the Earth was once the heavens and the sun. These are ridiculous. Therefore, by a ridiculous argument, Aristotle proves that motion is ungenerated, having never begun.

The argument that motion is indestructible and will never cease because when motion stops, the movable remains, which can be moved again, and lest this potential be in vain, it will be moved again sometime: therefore, there is motion after the last motion, does not hold up any better. But by what necessity does it follow that,

when motion ceases, the movable itself remains? Perhaps because beings cannot vanish into nothingness, just as they cannot come from nothing? Yet indeed, the substantial forms of stones, plants, animals, and all generable and corruptible things, once corrupted, vanish into nothing; but the matter capable of being moved remains. Why must this potential necessarily be actualized? Lest some natural potential be in vain. Is this impossible? The entire earth could turn into gold, and the sea into silver: when will that happen? The entire air could transform into fire and fire into water: when will these occur? The entire earth could move in space, yet it will never move: therefore, not every potential must necessarily be actualized. There is therefore no inference that after the last there will be subsequent motion. How does it also follow: if motion ceases, there will be motion after the last? Motion can cease without it being the last. I am writing now, after an hour I will cease to write: therefore, is it the last writing? If no other follows, it will indeed be the last: if another follows, it will not be the last, because the previous one was not the last; today will end, but not as the last day, with tomorrow following: if it does not follow, it will be the last. Therefore, motion can cease without it being the last motion.

Finally, Aristotle attempted to prove the eternity of motion from the infinity and perpetuity of time, arguing that if time is infinite, then motion will be eternal, for motion cannot exist without time. But I ask: Is it clearly evident that time is infinite? That it never began? He argues, as if it were not evident, that time is infinite because there is always motion. But what kind of circular reasoning is this: motion is eternal because time is infinite; time is infinite because there is always motion? It's proving the same thing by itself. What kind of philosophy is this?

He constructs another reason: that time is always at the beginning of the future; thus, it will never reach an end; therefore, it is everlasting and infinite. But how is it always at the beginning of the future?

Because the instant is like a point in a circle, the end of past time and the beginning of future time. But if there will be no more future time, at what future time's instant will it be the beginning? What needs to be proven, that time will always be future, is assumed as given. Unless he proves that time will always continue perpetually into the future, the rationale is empty, a very weak demonstration of the infiniteness of time. Therefore, since Aristotle has not convincingly proven the eternity of motion, the eternity of the heavens and the world cannot be proven from this either.

Having dismissed the eternity of motion, let us see if this other Achilles, taken up by the nature of the heavens which lacks contrariety, has any strength. The heavens, he claims, are ungenerable and incorruptible because they have no contrary: everything that is generated is generated from a contrary or is corrupted. He proves the lack of a contrary from motion, because circular motion has no contrary motion. Let us weigh this reason, or rather, examine this putrid sophism, and behold this Thersites, who seems to the entire Peripatetic school the mightiest Achilles.

Indeed, to inspect this highly absurd paralogism, it is noteworthy how Aristotle spoke of the generation and creation of the world as if he were discussing the generation and creation of any other natural or artificial thing. For everything that is made by nature or art comes from pre-existing material, and artificial things, whether they are homogeneous or heterogeneous, come from pre-existing material, like a statue from bronze, a coin from silver, a vessel from gold, a house from stones, cement from wood; but natural things come from a changing material, like vapor from water, fire from wood, a tree from a seed, a bird from an egg, an animal from a seed; for the materials from which these are made do not remain.

Thus, Aristotle considered the generation of the world with a very crude and blunt intellect. The question is whether the entire world,

which, apart from God, encompasses all being and all nature, is ungenerated or was made at some point in time. Since the universe consists generally of all beings, nothing could have existed before it that could be involved in its generation. If the universe encompasses all beings apart from God, no beings can be found outside of the universe: therefore, Aristotle was mistaken to speak of the world's generation as if the universe were just one of the generable and corruptible beings. The universe itself includes the material and causes of all natural generations, otherwise, it would not be a universe: thus, it could only have been made from nothing by God the Greatest and Best. Therefore, the inference does not hold: the world is not like these naturally generable and corruptible beings: hence, it was not generated or ever made: therefore, it is eternal. For each of these has the characteristic of being made from a subject; but the characteristic of the universe, which includes all being, is to be made from nothing, that is, from no subject: for that subject must also have been made; thus, we either go on infinitely, if that subject is also said to be made from another, or we must say the universe was made from nothing. Aristotle, therefore, in questioning whether the whole world was ever made, seems to gratuitously assume a subject along with other causes of natural generation as not made, which was exactly what needed to be proved. If by the same reasoning he also wants that subject to be made from a subject: then there would be an infinite regression.

Aristotle's claim that the heavens have no contrary—how does he know this? By sense or by reason? If by reason, as he himself says, nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses; if a sense is lacking, some knowledge must also be lacking; a blind person cannot judge colors, nor a deaf person sounds. So, on what sense does Aristotle's reasoning rely, to which experiential sense does it adhere? Touch? Was he, like another Prometheus, carried up to the heavens to recognize that body by touch? Indeed, these material

senses—touch, taste, smell, and even the more spiritual sense of hearing—do not reach so high; but sight does reach. However, sight sees lights in the sky and sometimes darkness, such as when the moon is eclipsed, and observes the clarity and translucence of spheres and the opacity of stars, which are not transparent to sight. These are indeed contrary qualities.

Who knows that the active and passive contrariety, such as between hot and cold, wet and dry, does not exist in the heavens? All antiquity unanimously declared that the sun and all the stars possess a fiery nature and are endowed with fiery heat, and sense itself demonstrates this; to abandon sense and follow reason alone is madness and folly. Aristotle alone, forsaking sense, followed reason, claiming the sun is not hot because it is white in color. But who does not see that pure fire's flame is white and glowing? Similarly, the light of the sun passing through a glass vessel filled with water becomes exceedingly bright, dazzling the eyes as the sun does: it also becomes extremely hot, such that, when brought near a tinder, it ignites fire. Therefore, there is heat in the heavens, if we are to trust our senses; the sun seems utterly like our earthly fire, as fire is similar to fire and produces similar effects.

Therefore, since the heavens are hot, they surely have a contrary; if one of the contraries exists in nature, so does the other. If Aristotle meant to say that everything generated consists of contraries, then clearly fire, whose generation is most apparent, would have to be both hot and cold, and each element would consist of contrary powers and qualities. But how can anything consist of contraries when they cannot coexist in the same subject? They act against each other and corrupt each other: heat attacks and destroys cold by its very nature, and cold does the same to heat. Thus, the nature of the heavens does have a contrary, namely cold, since it is hot, but not two contraries simultaneously; for the nature of fire is not both hot and cold at the same time.

The question raised here is pivotal: Is the nature of the heavens, like fire, generable and corruptible? Why not in parts? How does Aristotle know that there is no new generation in the heavens, just as in the air where new formations constantly occur through the generation of many meteorological impressions? Heat is never idle; it constantly acts, especially where it is vigorous and present in nearby matter; if it acts on distant matter, it acts even more on what is near. Therefore, the heavens have a contrary and new generation could occur within them just as in other elements—what would prevent this? If we do not perceive this generation with our sight, it is similarly true that we often do not see the stars for long: yet the entire sky is still filled with stars, which are visible from the deepest pits of the earth.

Moreover, how valid is the argument with which Aristotle proves that the heavens have no contrary? He claims it's because there is no motion contrary to the motion of the heavens. What kind of argument is that? What reasoning? Is it permissible to infer a universal from a particular? "The heavens have no contrary in motion: therefore, they have no contrary at all." What kind of inference is this? Is the contrariety of motion all there is to contrariety?

Then: regarding the active and passive qualities, what relevance does the opposition of motion have? The earth indeed rests perpetually, moved by no opposing motion, such as upward or downward: therefore, does it have no opposite? If someone claims that it can be moved directly towards the center in parts, then certainly, if a portion of the heavens is positioned on the earth, it will fly upwards to its own place like fire, and will not remain immobile. But if in the entire cosmos the heaven is moved by the motion of the prime mover from the east to the west, and according to the true motion of the planets, on the contrary, from the west to the east, why are these motions not considered opposing? Why are direct motions

upward and downward more opposite than circular motions from right to left and from left to right? Therefore, the heaven does have opposing motions. – Likewise, the upper elements are moved in a circle, as the motion of comets demonstrates: therefore, do they not have an opposite? And if that motion is called violent and against nature, how is it perpetual? Is there then some perpetual violence? And if in the entire cosmos the things that move up and down are indeed moved by opposite motions, to that extent they are moved as far as they are endowed with opposite qualities, heaviness and lightness, surely such qualities are not opposite in terms of action and passion, like heat and cold: why then did he infer from this opposition an opposition of action and passion according to which generation and corruption occur? Therefore, it is a rotten sophism, an absurdly fallacious argument of this kind.

Indeed, the other three reasons are utterly trivial and of no importance. They are based on the etymology of aether, which was called heaven by the ancients; that it is the perpetual abode of the gods; and that it has been handed down in memory that no change has ever occurred in heaven. But these, I say, are most trivial. For heaven was called aether by the ancients not only because of its perpetual motion, but because of its brightness, clarity, light, and heat; indeed, the ancients believed it was fiery. – Then follows the argument: the heaven is in perpetual motion; therefore, it was never created? No one before Aristotle thought this; indeed, all antiquity with remarkable consensus placed a beginning and creation to the heaven and the entire world. And finally, names are indeed assigned by human agreement to express things, not to declare or intimately demonstrate their natures. – That the heavens have been bestowed as an eternal, uncreated, and immortal abode to the unborn, immortal, and eternal gods by the ancients is most similar to poetic fables. Does an incorporeal God require a corporeal place to dwell? – As for the claim that it has not been handed down in memory by the

ancients that any change has ever occurred in heaven, this is utterly false. For it is recorded in the histories of the Hebrews that the sun and the moon stood still in the sky for the span of an entire day; even if one were to claim this is false, it suffices that it has been handed down in memory. Also recorded in memory by poets is the burning of Phaethon; from which some Pythagoreans said the Milky Way was the path made by the stars that fell in that destruction; others say it was the path of the sun itself, which at some time was carried along this circle. Therefore, all of Aristotle's Achilles lie defeated; it has been shown that all his reasons for the eternity of the world are rotten sophisms and absurd fallacies.

After Aristotle, there were indeed philosophers who erroneously speculated about the eternity of the world, who either out of a favor towards Aristotle, or because of intellectual blindness and mental confusion, placing light in darkness and darkness in light, with other newly invented reasons, constructed a new eternity of the world. Nevertheless, they were no more successful. "Why," they ask, "should the eternal non-existence of the universe be more plausible than its existence? Why did God remain idle through infinite ages, doing nothing? Could He not, did He not know how, or did He not wish to produce the world from eternity? Why, after eternal ages past, as if awakening from sleep, did He begin the construction of the world's machinery and not create it earlier? If God is the first and eternal cause, why not also an eternal effect? How did He change to become an active agent without being acted upon? If time never began, how did the world begin, since there is no time without motion? But if time began, there must be a time for time, for it must be thought to have begun at some point: thus, time began at some time. If the world was not created from eternity, then the Creator was once potentially operative, not actually; but this is imperfection."

However, these arguments are merely tricks, childish tactics, and utterly trivial arguments. I too shall ask: why did God, being of infinite power, create this world finite in size, and not infinite? Why only one world, not several, not countless? Why did He wish the sun to move from east to west, and not the reverse, or from north to south, or vice versa? Why did He make the sun more splendid than other stars, and not make the stars even more luminous than the sun? Why did He place the moon beneath the sun, not above it? Why did He not create more or fewer, larger or smaller, higher or lower stars in the sky?

Indeed, God, the creator of the world, acts freely, operating through intellect and will as He pleases and deems appropriate; He created the world when He wished, as He liked, as was fitting, by His own power.

It is not fitting for a king to make servants equal to himself in power and dignity: God did not wish to make the world coeternal with Himself. What then? They say that existence is better than non-existence: therefore, it would be better for the world to have existed from eternity than not at all. I will say: why then did God not make the world the best possible, without any privation at all, if privation is bad? Why not perpetual day without night? Light without darkness? Life without death? By a similar reasoning, it should be argued that what is born should not be liable to decay, because generation is better than corruption, and life is better than death. Why then are not all things—plants, animals, humans, and everything else that is generated annually—not born from the beginning and preserved incorruptible, if indeed existence is so much better than non-existence? Therefore, this reasoning is a deceptive argument and a rotten sophism.

The claim that God was idle through infinite ages if the world is not eternal is utterly baseless. These thinkers imagine infinite spans of

time before the world was created, just as they imagine vast spaces beyond the heavens. But just as there is no place beyond this world, so there was no time before this world. Then follows: there was no creation of the world, thus was God idle? Indeed, the most excellent and perfect action of the intellect is contemplation; and God, being the highest intellect, surely even if a man performs no external actions, he is not idle if he engages in inner contemplation. God perpetually contemplates Himself and the eternal ideas of all things within Himself: He indeed could have, knew how to, but chose not to create the world from eternity, because He did not want to make the world equal in eternity to Himself. Or perhaps He could not, just as neither in substance nor in magnitude; for it is impossible for the created to be infinite: and what is impossible cannot occur.

Therefore, He created the world when and how it pleased Him, and when it was appropriate and proper to do so. A king might build a city, or a temple, or some palace, having the blueprint for the entire structure: he does not wish, however, until a certain time; is he then envious or changed in will because he did not choose to act earlier when he could have?

Indeed, He chose not to produce from eternity, so that the creature would not be coeternal with Him, lest we think that He did not create the universe freely, but out of necessity, and that He operates this world as a king does a kingdom or a royal residence: so that the author of the universe might be more clearly recognized and His infinite power, by which He created all from nothing, be more splendidly apparent, and all nations might honor His majesty universally with the utmost religion and piety, worshiping and adoring Him. For the creation and providence of the universe are the foundation of divine worship and of all piety and religion.

The subsequent argument asks: if the cause is eternal, must the effect also be eternal? I say, why should the inference follow that because God is eternal, the world must also be eternal; and not this:

God is infinite, therefore the world is infinite? For eternity is a form of infinity.

Moreover, what necessity is there that because a cause is perpetual, its effects must also naturally be perpetual? Indeed, in the universe there are many perpetual causes, such as the sun, stars, and heaven, whose effects, however, are corruptible and temporary, not perpetual; for all things that are generated are naturally corruptible. Likewise, light generated by the perpetual sun in this world of ours is not perpetual.

It does not follow any less that if the world was not created from eternity, the creator has changed, becoming from non-acting to acting. Indeed, in nature we see many changes in effects without changes in their causes; for example, the sun does not illuminate this house when the doors are closed, but illuminates it when the doors are opened, without any change occurring in the sun; similarly, a fire goes from not heating to heating without itself changing; indeed, every agent, as long as it is acting, is unmoved, since action is in the affected, not in the agent. The sun illuminates: the illumination is not in the sun, but in the air; fire heats: the heating is not in the fire, but in the water. Thus God, even according to the universal understanding, moves the heavens always remaining unmoved, as He is the prime mover; similarly, without any change in Himself, He created the world when it pleased Him.

And if it is said that He was operating potentially, not actually, what absurdity does this entail? Is all potential to be deemed an imperfection? Indeed, the potential of matter is an imperfection that is to be perfected by the advent of form; but the potential of agents is a perfection, not an imperfection; a perfect artisan, while performing the tasks of his craft, does not perfect himself but his works; similarly, the sun illuminating and the fire heating.

The argument that takes time into account, suggesting that if time once began, it must have begun in time, is utterly fanciful. I say: beyond the outermost surface of the heavens there is no place. Should this be considered false because it claims there is something beyond place and differs in location? Certainly not, but indeed, beyond the heavens we imagine some sort of empty space; likewise, before the creation of the world, we conceive and imagine certain spans of time. Thus, we say that time once began and will also end, meaning that it was not always, nor will it always be. What then? Will this world be destroyed? Indeed: for He who created can also destroy, and He will destroy and make all things new. Does God then commit an unforgivable sin by destroying this perfect world? It is wrong to destroy what is perfect and best; but what then? Does not corruption destroy everything that generation has produced? Do not plants, animals, humans die? Is that therefore an unforgivable sin? Nevertheless, all things that nature creates are good and perfect, except for monsters, which occur outside its intention.

Others argue from the standpoint of the model or idea; indeed, the model of the world is eternal: therefore, so is the world. For it is spoken of relatively; and things that are spoken of relatively must exist simultaneously. Therefore, a father is not prior to his born son, to whom he is naturally related; what madness is this? Clearly, all things known are referred to their respective fields of knowledge: they are nevertheless prior; for many known things are still not yet known; and any architect, before the construction of a building, forms the model and the idea of it in his mind. Therefore, the model is naturally prior to the building by its nature.

Having dismissed the empty philosophies, the trifles, and the vain intricacies of the pagan philosophers with their deceptive arguments—or rather, their delusions and impostures, which are full of frivolity, foolishness, ignorance, and madness—let us turn to Moses, the progenitor of true and divine philosophy. He is indeed

the pinnacle of all philosophers, the alpha of all the wise, the summit of all philosophy and the pillar of all the most sacred theology; a man filled with all human and divine wisdom and all piety, a teacher and instructor of all wisdom and piety in God, who among all the sages whom antiquity revered and admired exceedingly, shines like the sun among the stars; who, as the most ancient of all the philosophers whose records exist and holds the foremost place, so too far surpasses all in doctrine and wisdom. He does not teach the eternity of the world with deceptive arguments, but most firmly asserts that the entirety of things has emanated from God.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," that is, the entirety of things; a very brief phrase that encompasses very few words, yet contains many meanings, and indeed, those of the deepest, most truthful, and greatest significance. For in these words, Divine Moses asserts that God, the Supreme Good, is the primary being, independent, eternal, the first cause of all beings, perfect, unique, free, and voluntary. If God preceded the entirety of beings, it is necessarily said that He is first by nature and age; if everything depends on Him, then He must be acknowledged as independent; for He cannot depend on a prior entity as though from a principle and cause. If the totality of beings began at some time, then He must possess eternity. For if He too began at some time, it must be said that He began with some author; for that which is utterly nothing can do utterly nothing. Therefore, given the existence of the totality of beings, it is absolutely necessary that the author of the universe be eternal; otherwise, from utter nothingness, nothing could ever have come to be. Likewise, if the universe of beings depends on Him, as principle and cause, He is the first cause: for nothing is prior to Him; perfect, indeed, because He made the whole and perfect universe from nothing, from no being, from no pre-existing matter; and finally, free, because if He did not create from eternity but at some time, He thus did not create out of the necessity of nature, but from

the will of free choice, when it pleased Him and He found it agreeable. Thus, Divine Moses teaches all these things through this simple thesis and assertion.

We must consider whether Moses' first assertion is consistent with reason; for it seems contrary to the reasoning of vain philosophy to claim that anything is made from nothing. From this principle, many philosophers, with a raised eyebrow of arrogance, professing themselves as gods of truth and wisdom, wanting to measure, indeed to comprehend, the heavens with a span, declare it utterly impossible for anything to be made from nothing. They think of God as akin to artisans who cannot make anything entirely from nothing but always complete their works from suitable and prepared material. But by what reasoning does it follow that what is impossible for one, must be declared utterly impossible? The moon cannot make a clear and splendid day with its brightness: therefore, can the sun not do so? Art or nature cannot make something from nothing: therefore, can neither God? Thus, leaving empty philosophy with its deceptive arguments behind, along with all theologians, we say that Divine Moses' thesis and divine assertion are not only not discordant but are highly consonant and supremely consistent with reason.

For this world must either be made or not made. And indeed, if it is entirely unmade, it must be, and must have been, entirely eternal, since it never began to exist. Not only eternal, but also completely independent of any cause; for what is entirely unmade has no cause, no principle; for what has a cause, undergoes the condition of being an effect. Therefore, if the totality of things is entirely unmade, it must be said to exist by itself and to have been existing eternally by its own essence, having no cause or principle whatsoever. However, not all beings can be such; for those that by their nature are generable and corruptible have causes and principles, they are made, not unmade. Therefore, the totality of things is not entirely unmade.

Someone might say: the heavens, the earth, and the intermediate bodies are uncreated and unmade; therefore, they are eternal. However, I will also admit their independence from all causes: thus, none of these depend on another, or is posterior to another; for there is no prior cause: therefore, they exist by themselves from eternity: by themselves, therefore, they also operate; for the operation of any entity proceeds from its own essence and nature: by themselves, therefore, they exist and operate. But I ask: do they operate in vain and at random, or for the sake of something? If in vain, then surely this entire world is useless; if for the sake of something, for whose sake is it that natural things, plants, animals, humans are generated? But clearly none of these bodies can generate these on their own, neither the earth without water and sky, nor the sky without these. Therefore, in their operation, they are not independent, but indeed depend on each other so as not to operate aimlessly and at random. But I ask: do the heavens and the elements possess sense and reason to recognize for whose sake they operate? If they do not recognize it and are not governed by any agent, how can they interact and operate? To say that the earth is endowed with sense and reason is utterly foolish. What if someone posits a world soul that governs the world, just as our spirit governs our body: then this world depends on some insensible and invisible cause; but this world soul, if it is not God, what kind of being would it be?

Moreover, if these worldly bodies are entirely unmade and completely independent of any cause or principle: then they will be entirely different in nature and operation, having nothing in common: is the world, therefore, not one? For how is it possible that entities that are entirely different and opposed by nature constitute one by themselves? For there cannot surely be order among entirely different entities, where there is neither a prior nor a subsequent; what then? Is this world without any order, arrangement, and composition? Therefore, some invisible cause must be organizing

and ordering the universality of entities. Thus, the world is not completely independent, nor unmade; and if these bodies are independent and unmade, why are they not also infinite? For they have no determining or limiting cause. Is the world, therefore, infinite? Is the earth an infinite body? Common sense itself protests. If, therefore, this world is one, finite, and ordered, it cannot be entirely unmade.

To assert that something is unmade only in part, like the material itself being unmade—as if an artisan, working from any given material, creates a specific work, he does not make the material itself, but receives and shapes it into the form and figure he intends—thus, the material of the world would be unmade: hence independent, and therefore infinite. But is material by its very nature infinite in magnitude? Then the world would be infinite in magnitude; for what is completely independent must necessarily be infinite; it has no cause that limits its existence and defines and circumscribes it. Therefore, material should not be considered independent and coeternal with God; for it would also be by its very nature equal to God, as infinite, and the world would simply be infinite.

Thus, we must say that the entire world is made. But to say that the world made itself is nonsensical; for nothing can generate itself. What is generated and becomes, does not yet exist; but what does not exist, how can it operate? Something cannot simultaneously be and not be. If the world thus made itself, it was at the same time and was not. But if the universe of things was made: therefore, it was from nothing, since no material could have pre-existed from which beings were made, unless that material itself was made. Either from another material or from none: if from another, an infinite regress is given, and ultimately, since it too would be encompassed within the universe of entities, for it is not nothing but something being, it must

necessarily be asserted to be made; for the universality of entities being made implies that some part of it was not made.

From this, Moses with utmost reason asserted in his first proposition that the universality of things was made from nothing, saying: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Created, that is, made from nothing and simply made. For it is one thing to become something qualitative or quantitative, white or large; another to become a substance, and yet another for this substance to acquire a nature; another still to become all substance. For white comes from what is not white, and large from what is small, that is, the subject, which was previously not white and small, becomes white and large; but prior to these supervening accidents, there was substance.

Likewise, when a plant or animal is formed, it is made from something else; the material previously existed in another form. But if I say all substance is made, I mean it is simply made. For if every being was made, before it was made there was nothing of the universe of entities; for what does not exist, comes into being; what is not white becomes white; what is not a being becomes a being: therefore, nothing. For what is made from non-being into actual being, is not simply made, but only becomes this from that.

If, therefore, the universe of things was simply made, it must have been made from absolutely no existing entity; and if the world was made, it certainly cannot be eternal. For that which is made, was not; but always to be and sometimes not to be is a clear contradiction: we do not say that the heavens and the earth are now being made, because they exist. If they have always existed as they do now, they were never made, because they were never less than they are now. In no way, therefore, can what is made be eternal.

It is necessary that the cause by its nature precedes its effect; for the efficient cause to begin simultaneously with its effect in the same first instant is impossible. For the effect would in the same instant be

and not be; what is being made, does not exist. If it existed in the first instant, it was not being made; if it was being made and existed, it simultaneously was and was not. It is necessary, therefore, that at least for an instant the efficient cause of the world preceded it. If by an instant: after this, therefore, the world begins; if God preceded the world, it was only by His own duration: and His own duration is eternity. Therefore, by eternity, the eternal cause preceded the world.

Let's suppose, for argument's sake, that something can be made from eternity; let the world have been made from eternity; the heavens have been created from eternity. Is this body, which we see moving in a perpetual circle, made with motion and time, or without them? If it is said to be without them: does the heaven move by its nature, or by some external force? If by its nature: how then did it remain immobile against its nature for eternal ages, and only later began to move? If it moves by force: why does it have perpetual motion? Certainly, no forced motion is perpetual. But if it was made with them, then time and motion cannot be eternal, for they are not infinite; eternity, however, is a kind of infinity. It is clear that time cannot be eternal; what consists of finite parts cannot be infinite. Moments, hours, and days are finite and thus cannot constitute infinite time. If moments are infinite, then hours, days, months, and years are also infinite; and ages would be infinite too. If these are finite, time too is finite; but if these are infinite, then no more ages have passed than days, than hours, than moments. Therefore, part and whole would be equal; an hour would be equal to a day, a month, a year, an age. But something more infinite than the infinite cannot exist, nor can there be anything greater, otherwise it would not be infinite.

Furthermore; if time is infinite, today will indeed be infinitely distant from some point in time. But is it infinitely distant from all past days? Clearly, it would be infinitely distant from yesterday. But might it be more distant from some days than others, or just one

day? If from more days: were those days simultaneous, or one after another, as now? If one after another: is there also an infinite distance between them? One must assume, from which the others are infinitely distant; for multiple days cannot exist simultaneously. But is that one day an infinite or finite amount of time? If finite, it began; if infinite, how can it be just one day? Did the heaven rest for an infinite time against its nature? If today is only infinitely distant from one day, then indeed the infinite is defined by finite terms, namely today and that day from which it is infinitely distant.

The considerations about motion are the same. Since it consists of finite parts, how can it be infinite? The daily rotations are finite, as are the monthly and yearly rotations of the moon and sun, and so too the heaven. Has the prime mover completed more rotations for the moon or the sun? If equal: the motion of a day will be equal to the motion of a month and a year; if more of the latter and fewer of the former, a greater than infinite will be given. Today's rotation will also be infinitely distant from a preceding one; if from none, then the motion is not infinite; if from one, then the infinite is bounded by limits. If time is eternal, an infinite multitude of days, rotations, generations, stones, plants, animals, humans, and other natural entities would have proceeded. However, an infinite multitude cannot exist; every multitude is countable: every number is finite, for it has a beginning; it also has an end, for every addition of a unit makes it larger; no number can be given that does not increase with the addition of a unit: the infinite, by its very nature, can neither grow nor diminish. Every number also denotes an order and measure of parts. If an infinite multitude of things has proceeded, how can the infinite become larger? For now, more humans, animals, plants, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds are being produced than a thousand years ago; fewer generations of these are now than will be in the future. Therefore, the infinite can be less or more and already passed: which is clearly contradictory to the nature of the infinite. If

an infinite future cannot be traversed, just as a number cannot, how can the past equal the future?

Let's assume that infinite time has passed, and that the heavens were created from eternity; when the heavens were made, in which part of the sky was the sun made? Currently, it is either in the east, or in the midday, or in the west, or in the opposite hemisphere; where, then, was the sun made? In all places at once, in none, or in just one? If nowhere: how was it made? If everywhere: how can a body, naturally one, be in multiple places at once? Thus, only in one place: but how was it made there? With motion, as it is now, or with stillness, to later begin moving? If with stillness: then it remained motionless for an infinite time in eternity, of which no beginning, no first instant can be found. But no forced state is perpetual. If its motion is natural, it remained motionless for an infinite time by force; if stillness is natural to it, it now moves perpetually by force. But if it was made with motion, as it is now, from the part in which it was made, to its opposite, say from east to west or vice versa, how much time did it consume? Finite, as now, or infinite? If finite: then time is not eternal; for this semicircle is completed in a span of twelve hours; if infinite: why does it now complete in a finite time? Therefore, it was not moving naturally, as it does now; it must have been forcibly held for an infinite time, not to move naturally as it does now.

Given also an eternal moving body, the motion cannot be infinite and eternal. Let's assume an eternal fire and eternal combustible material; combustion cannot be eternal; for heating precedes, and combustion does not occur instantaneously. Likewise, at the first instant of eternity, before which we can neither imagine nor conceive anything prior, if there is a mover and something movable, motion cannot exist; because motion does not occur instantaneously. Therefore, it cannot be eternal, but it must be said that the naturally movable object rested throughout eternity.

When the world was created in our hemisphere, either there was no time, no day or night, no spring or summer, autumn or winter; or all existed simultaneously, multiple seasons, or just one. If none: then time is not eternal; if all: then opposites like summer and winter, day and night existed simultaneously in one hemisphere, which is impossible; the sun cannot be both present and absent, approaching and receding at the same time. Therefore, only one; but what? Was there an infinite day or night? An infinite spring or summer, autumn or winter? Therefore, just as the world is finite in size, it is also finite in time, and just as it could not become infinite, coequal, and consubstantial with God, it could also not be coeternal. If it had been created countless ages before, it still could not have been created earlier; if it were coeternal with God, it could not have been created earlier at all; for there is nothing before eternity, not even an instant. Therefore, it must have been produced; for if freely, it might not have been produced. But it could not be coeternal; for nothing is before or prior to eternity; not afterwards, because what has been made once must necessarily have been made, and what has been made cannot become unmade, nor what has been born become unborn; nor in the same instant of eternity; for what exists must necessarily exist, since nothing can simultaneously be and not be. However, God does not operate by the necessity of nature, as the sun illuminates and fire heats, but with intellect, from the will of free choice.

If God operated out of necessity, where would the diversity of so many different entities come from? For every simple and single cause produces only one type of effect; fire heats, the sun illuminates, the heavens move. Therefore, if God operated out of the necessity of nature, being of one simple and uncompounded nature, He would have produced only one homogeneous being of the same kind and reason; but the world is a heterogeneous whole and universe; for fire is not of the same nature as water, nor earth as

heaven. Thus, we must either assert that the cause of the universality of entities is multiple and imagine multiple primary causes, or state that the primary cause, God, operates not from the necessity of nature, but from intellect and the will of free choice: therefore, the world is not produced as by its own nature it is free. But if it had been produced from eternity, it could not have not been produced, and would have lacked the freedom to produce.

If someone says that from eternity God possessed the same power, wisdom, and goodness as when He created the world: why then could He not have created it from then? I will say: if He now still enjoys the same power, why can He not now create something eternal? Why not something infinite and coequal and consubstantial with Himself? Because that is indeed impossible. Thus I speak of eternity.

It has therefore been demonstrated that the world is not independent and uncaused, either wholly or in part; not made by itself and eternal; but rather made at some time. Indeed, whatever is generated must be generated by something; it cannot generate itself, as that would mean it would simultaneously exist and not exist, which is impossible. Therefore, it is necessary to attribute to the universe of beings an efficient cause that is independent and eternal. For if nothing had been eternal, from whom would the universe have been made? If at some time there was absolutely nothing, no being whatsoever, it would indeed have been impossible to find any being, and there would also be nothing now. Thus, the Divine Moses most wisely and skillfully attributes the creation of the entire world to God the Best and Greatest, saying: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

This divine sentence, which contains the deepest meanings in very few words—hidden, yet most true. Moses did not want to resemble those verbose professors of human wisdom, whose tongues are wise,

but whose minds are foolish; like barren trees, producing only sterile flowers, and no fruit. Moses, the divine prophet, is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in abundance, bringing forth the fruits of truth, doctrine, and wisdom; its leaves do not wither: for his words are not empty, but full of divine wisdom. This Mosaic thesis is like that life-giving tree beside the river in paradise, bearing twelve fruits. For this thesis, when closely observed and considered with diligent understanding, brings forth twelve propositions of divine philosophy.

1. The world is not independent and uncaused.
2. It was not made by chance or by itself.
3. It was made by God.
4. It was made from nothing, with no pre-existing material.
5. It was made without any motion or change, as those naturally generated, and without any delay in time, but instantly.
6. It was not made from eternity, but at some time had a beginning.
7. God is the primary nature before all things.
8. The nature of God is independent and needs nothing.
9. God is eternal, before all time.
10. God is the first cause and principle from which heaven and nature depend simply and clearly, some more clearly, others more obscurely.
11. The cause is perfect and best by itself, needing no secondary cause, whether material, instrumental, ministerial, or of external example, motion, or time, as worldly craftsmen do.

12. The cause is not necessary, but free, which created the world when and how it pleased and chose.

Indeed, all the theses and axioms of divine philosophy follow from it, and necessarily so if one observes closely; they are very much in agreement with reason. The first thesis is that this world is not independent or entirely uncaused. For who, seeing a very large building, would think it was built by no builder? A clock without a craftsman? A man not born of another man? If it were entirely uncaused, as we have said, it would indeed be infinite, having no determining cause; it cannot terminate itself, because it is not the cause of itself. Also, what is independent must necessarily be one, simple, and primal; but the world is not a single being, but many; not simple, but composite; nor primal, because it has components that are principles of form and matter. It is also in agreement with reason that the world was not made by itself, or by chance; for the same thing cannot be the cause of itself: it would be both existent and non-existent; and what happens by chance lacks order and reason: but the world enjoys the highest order, arrangement, and reason. It would be folly if anyone were to think that any workmanship, composed with the highest art and reason, made itself when it did not exist, or was made by chance and without reason, or that a man was born by chance, or of himself. Therefore, the order and arrangement of the elemental and celestial bodies, the stars, planets, motions, times, and actions of nature, always unerring, show that the world was made by a cause far most powerful and most wise, from which the entire universe of beings depends, is governed, and is preserved lest it perish.

DISSERTATION SIX ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THINGS

In the beginning, or the principle, God created the heaven and the earth. The earth, however, was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep... And God said: Let there be light, etc.

There has been ample and fierce debate about the principles of natural things among the ancient physiologists, with some positing only one principle, others many: some more, others fewer; some finite, others infinite. Parmenides, for instance, posited one finite and immobile principle; Melissus one immobile, but infinite; Thales, followed by six other wise men of Greece, declared water to be the principle of natural things, seeing that all living things primarily consist of moisture; Diogenes and Anaximenes posited air; Heraclitus fire; Hesiod earth. Others posited vapor as a substance intermediate between water and air; Anaxagoras posited a chaos of atoms differing in form and possessing opposing qualities, from which, once separated and distinctly arranged, the divine mind composed this world. Anaximander also posited atoms made from chaos; likewise, Democritus, but all of these atoms differed only in shape and position. Empedocles and Hippocrates posited four elements; others three, excluding earth; yet others two extremes: fire and earth. Pythagoras posited numbers: even and odd; Plato, if Aristotle is to be believed, posited three: the small, the large, and the *νοῦς* or idea. Aristotle finally expended the greatest effort and labor in his treatise on principles.

For he taught that the principles of natural things are neither solely one principle, whether finite or infinite, contrary to Parmenides and Melissus; nor are there infinite principles, contrary to Anaximander

and others; not chaos and homoeomeria, contrary to Anaxagoras; not atoms, against Democritus and Leucippus; not these sensible elements, against Empedocles; not numbers and shapes, against Pythagoras; nor finally the great, the small, and ideas, against Plato; but that principles should be finite, permanent, ungenerated and distinct from each other and from themselves, from which all things are generated, being opposites; and finally neither more nor fewer than three, namely: matter, form, and the privation opposed to this; besides these, there is also an efficient and final principle of all things that are consistent with nature. Aristotle taught these fifteen theses on the principles of natural things in a most verbose work. Therefore, Aristotle, contrary to all earlier philosophers, posits three principles of natural things: matter, form, and privation.

However, Moses, the father of theosophy and the alpha of all philosophers, posits only two principles, heaven and earth, saying: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: (Berescit bara Elohim eth hascamain veeth haares) "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1): In the beginning, in the sense of the beginning of all natural things, about which he later discusses, speaking of the production of plants, animals, and humans, he establishes the heaven as the active principle and father of nature, and the earth as the passive principle and mother. Now, I ask, let us see which are the truer principles, those of Moses or of Aristotle.

Indeed, if Aristotle's theses are true, then it is necessary that Moses' principles also be true. For Moses, unlike Parmenides, did not posit only one principle, nor infinite ones, like others; not chaos and homoeomeria, like Anaxagoras; not atoms, like Democritus and Leucippus; not elements, like Empedocles; not mathematical entities, numbers or shapes, like Pythagoras; nor the great, the small, and ideas, like Plato. But he posited two finite principles, namely: heaven and earth; they are permanent: for these always endure; not generated from others: for these, as simple bodies, are not composed

of other elements; nor from each other: for heaven does not consist of earth nor does earth consist of heaven; from these all things are made, as sense itself demonstrates, and if there is any opposition in substance, these are most opposed; for the one is always mobile, the other perpetually stable; the one most translucent, the other most opaque; the one father of day, the other mother of night; the one abode of light, the other nest of darkness; the one source and origin of heat, the other root and cause of cold. Therefore, from the very theses of Aristotle, what Moses posited as the principles of things are most true.

Sense itself clearly demonstrates that all things arise from these primary bodies; for nothing does the earth produce unless fertilized by the influences of the heavens, just as a woman cannot give birth unless by conceiving the male seed. Thus, just as both parents are the creators of the born animal, so heaven and earth are the principle of things consistent with nature. As for the principles posited by Aristotle: matter, form, and privation, upon inspection of the nature of a principle, do not even seem worthy of this name to me, far from it that I should truly judge them as principles of things; nor without reason, especially after a careful examination of those main theses that he himself delivered about principles.

There are indeed three main theses; the first indeed is: that principles must be opposites; the second: that principles must be ungenerated and distinct from others and from each other; the third: that from these should be generated and formed whatever things are made by nature. But how is it possible that whatever entities are made, are made from opposites? For whatever entities are generated, they are substance: and substance, as he himself taught, has no opposite; the first opposition is situated in quality. Since the principles of substances must be substance, how can they be opposites? For what, according to his doctrine, are opposites, are accidents; but for the principles of substances to be accidents is hardly fitting. Therefore,

the principles of natural things should rather be said to be similar, not opposite; for like begets like, heat from heat, a human from a human, substance from substance.

But they say that in substance there can be found corporeal and incorporeal, animate and inanimate, sensible and insensible, rational and irrational. Certainly; but corporeal substance does not arise from incorporeal, nor rational from irrational, nor human from beast. Aristotle, however, calls the opposite principles privation and form. But if privation is nothing, why should it be considered a principle of natural things, a non-being as the principle of being? Is death the principle of life, blindness of sight, night of day, rest of motion? Therefore, there was once rest before motion: how then did he say motion is eternal? But lest we seem to be playing with Aristotle, let us deal with reasons. Privation is indeed nothing, by its very nature, it is non-being; for every being is either substance or accident: but an accident cannot be the principle of substance: therefore, this privation, which is posited as a principle, will not be an accident. Yet every substance, according to him, is either matter, form, or composed of these: but privation is none of these.

However, his followers claim that privation is not a principle of the ungenerated thing, but of generation itself; they do not describe it as mere negation, but as privation of form with the aptitude and disposition for it. But if Aristotle posits not the principles of natural things, but of generation, then among the principles should have been place, time, motion, and primary qualities; without these, natural generation does not occur. Why, then, did he posit privation, which is not necessary, instead of these, which are most necessary for generation? And if privation is said to imply aptitude and disposition, what then will be the potency of the matter itself, which they call potentiality? Therefore, privation is neither the aptitude nor the disposition of the subject: these belong to the potentiality of matter, hence privation is nothing by its nature, but non-being. Thus,

to say that privation is a principle of natural entities is no different from saying that death is the principle of life, blindness the principle of sight, obscurity the principle of light, cold the principle of heat, non-being the principle of being.

If someone says that it is necessary to posit this privation as the starting point from which generation begins, because everything that comes into being is not, since if it were, it would not come into being—that which becomes white is not white and that which is built is not built—I say as well: but what then? Does it follow then that privation is the principle of natural entities? How does this follow? What is a principle? Clearly, even without place, motion, time, powers, and qualities, indeed even the substances of the elements, it is impossible for anything to occur: why then are not these also posited as principles? For these entities truly exist, whereas privation is non-being and naturally nothing. If the absence or presence of a single form is sufficient to cause a change, why multiply principles and posit non-being as the principle of a natural entity, when indeed nothing naturally comes from nothing? If privation must be established as a principle because the absence of form is necessary for generation to occur, then surely anything could come from anything: a man from a father, a calf from a log, a lion from a sheep. Why is a man more likely to come from this privation than from that one? If someone says because of disposition: then this, rather than privation, should have been established in the triumvirate of principles; for this is necessarily required, whereas that is not, since the presence and absence of form can cause a change. But let us dismiss this daughter of Notus and Acheron from the throne of principle to the Tartarean depths and dedicate it to the Acherontic shadows, as a mole, friend of darkness, and let us consider and declare what by its own right and by its own nature ought to be deemed a principle.

Indeed, Aristotle, while he occupied many entire books on the subject of principles in his treatises on Physics and Metaphysics, scarcely taught the nature of a principle, except to say that principles must be opposites, permanent, ungenerated, and from which things that occur naturally are made. He did not truly convey what a principle is, but seemed to have delivered only the meanings of the name, which is that a principle is the first from which something either is, becomes, or is known. Some of these principles exist within things and others outside, and thus by nature a principle is called an element, reasoning, choice, essence, and that for the sake of which. Therefore, he encompassed all physical causes: matter, form, agent, end; and metaphysical: essences, kinds, species, differences, specific accidents, and finally all arts under the name and meaning of principle, but he did not provide a definition. Thus, he left the reasoning of a principle for us to investigate.

For us, therefore, it seems necessary to assert that a principle must absolutely be something; for what is nothing cannot be the cause of being, as nothing is naturally generated from nothing. Therefore, a principle that is the cause of being for others must itself be something and should not be counted among accidents. For what is naturally later cannot be the cause of being for what is prior; and the entities that are generated and occur naturally are substances: minerals, plants, animals, humans. Therefore, the principles from which these arise must necessarily be substances, not accidents; otherwise, a substance would come from an accident, and the latter would be the cause of being for the former; an accident is, by nature, later than a substance, for it relies on it as a base and foundation, without which it cannot naturally stand. Thus, the principle of natural entities is substance. Every substance is either corporeal or incorporeal: corporeal substance may be generated from incorporeal spirit, for like generates like, a human from a human, an animal from an animal. We inquire into the intrinsic and material principles,

not extrinsic ones. A corporeal house is not constructed from the architect's thoughts or from the air, but certainly from corporeal material, from stones and wood. Therefore, the principles of corporeal entities that are formed by nature must be corporeal.

The principle is corporeal substance, but not generated from others; for if principles were made and generated from others, it would not be these that should be called principles, but rather those from which they were composed. Therefore, the principles of natural entities must necessarily not be made through natural generation; otherwise, there would be principles of principles, leading to an infinite regress. Likewise, the principles of things must be permanent and incorruptible; for if these were destroyed, all nature of things would fail: thus, principles must always endure. Other things, which are formed by nature and made, need a cause of being; otherwise, they would not be principles at all. Therefore, for something to be a principle to those entities of which it is a principle, it must provide that existence by which they naturally consist. Indeed, all natural things consist of matter and form; this is the essence of natural beings, to consist of matter and form; hence, natural things are defined through these. Therefore, these are not the principles of natural entities if the nature of a principle is considered, but they must arise and emanate from principles. Most wisely and skillfully, Moses, the father of philosophy, posited heaven and earth as the principles of natural entities. For these are beings, they are substance, indeed corporeal substance, naturally ungenerated; and they are the cause of being for the generated, which occur naturally, as sense itself demonstrates more clearly and splendidly than light.

From this it is clear that privation cannot be considered among the principles of natural entities; for privation is not a being, a corporeal substance, ungenerated and giving existence to a species, since it is nothing. It is also evident that the other two principles posited by Aristotle are not worthy of this name; for these are not corporeal,

ungenerated, and permanent substances: indeed, bodies along with the souls of plants and animals, who does not see that they are generated and corrupt, and do not always remain the same?

Aristotle indeed posits prime matter and form as the principles of things, not secondary matter. But let us test these against the anvil of truth to see whether they are gold and silver, or merely brass and lead. He claims form is one of the principles of natural things. I ask: which form? Metaphysical, akin to Plato's ideas, mathematical, as in the figures and numbers of Pythagoras, or physical? Clearly, the physical form of physical things. But there is not just one form in physical things; some forms are accidental, others are substantial. Moreover, there are many substantial forms; some are simple as in the elements and the heavens; others are of minerals, stones, and other inanimate objects; some of plants; some of animals; and finally, some of humans endowed with intellect. Which of these will be the principle of natural entities? If accidental: then form and subject do not make something one in substance. If substantial: which one? The first of elements? The last of humans? Or something in between? If extreme or intermediate: not all things are made from these; not all natural entities are humans, animals, plants, or stones.

Furthermore, all these forms are in subjects; but principles must be ungenerated. If the first is simple, I ask: of the heavens, or of the elements? Or of which element? For there is not one and the same form of all elements; otherwise, all would have the same nature, and they would not be opposed to one another. If the forms of all elements, which are generated by nature, are substantial forms, because everything that is made is made from these elements, it would be better to posit the elements themselves as the principles of things, rather than matter and form, since the elements themselves also consist of these. Therefore, a prior form, which must be first and ungenerated, from which all things are made along with the first

and ungenerated matter, is not readily given. What, then, will be this principle of things?

Indeed, whatever things share one and the same substantial form do not differ according to substance; for if they differed, they would not have one and the same nature. But if the substantial forms of the elements are the substantial forms of all things that are formed by nature, then things formed by nature would not differ from the elements nor from each other—stones would not differ from metals, nor these from plants, nor these from animals in substance. But if we perceive, even through our senses, a very clear difference and distinction among these: then, it is not from these forms and subjects that whatever is made, is made in substance.

The Peripatetic says that form, in general, is the principle of things. But I ask: what exactly is this blessed form in general? Is it something from Plato's ideas fashioned in the air or in the sky? Perhaps it might be one of those metaphysical universal forms, which are called the forms of the primary substances of the whole. But what will it be? The specific form of a human, a lion, a cow? Or the generic form of an animal? Or even more universal, of a living being? Or higher up, of a body? Or perhaps the most universal and most general substance? Perhaps this last one; for it is first and ungenerated. But surely this is metaphysical, not physical form: it is insensible, not sensible; universal, not particular. However, the forms of sensible and particular things must necessarily be sensible and particular; and natural entities, being indeed sensible and particular, are subject to birth and death.

If there is one universal substantial form for everything, how would they differ? If not at all: then everything is one being, not many; if in some way: then not all things are made of this form and subject according to substance. If the form is placed in the triumvirate of principles only insofar as every natural being consists of some

material and form, then clearly all these forms are generated, like the impression of a seal in wax, the form of a vessel in gold, the figure of Caesar in bronze or marble, the form of fire in wood. The first principles must be ungenerated and always enduring; but these forms are generated and corrupt.

Then, what exactly is this form that serves as the principle of natural things? Is it a substance? An accident? Or something artificial?

When Aristotle speaks of form, he indeed brings examples only from the artificial, like the musical and the non-musical, the shaped and the unshaped; or from accidental forms, like being white and not white, health and sickness, heat and cold, moist and dry. However, he himself asserts that form is one substance with matter and the composite, and more of a substance than these. He also defines it as nature together with matter and more so as the nature which actively gives existence to a thing; and nature is the principle of motion and rest, but not of active motion, which can move, but of passive motion, by which natural things can be moved. But let's hold these promises to the fire of truth to see whether they turn out to be gold or lead. Form is substance. What is substance? That which exists by itself. But natural forms cannot subsist by themselves without matter: thus, form is not a substance, but more of an accident; for they can be present and absent, without the destruction of the subject, namely primary matter; for matter is ungenerable and incorruptible. Therefore, either form is not a substance, or a different definition of substance and accident must be assigned. For form fits the definition not of substance, but of accident; no other definition has been assigned elsewhere. If by the definition of substance, form is not a substance but more of an accident: how is it more of a substance than matter and the composite? Is what is not hot hotter than fire? Is what is not a substance more of a substance than what truly is a substance? But let's suppose, form is a substance: how is it more of a substance than matter? Matter is clearly the cause for the

existence of form, for without it a naturally generated form cannot exist; but matter can exist by its nature without form, nor is form the cause of matter; for matter is prior in nature: and what is prior does not depend on what is posterior.

The notion that substance does not admit of degrees of more or less raises a critical question: how then can form be "more of a substance"? If "more" signifies a sort of perfection, where does form derive this perfection from? From itself, from the composite, or from matter? If from matter, then matter would be more perfect than form, as it would be the cause imparting perfection; if from the composite, then the composite would be more perfect, and the effect would attribute perfection to its cause, since form is the cause of the composite; it cannot have it from itself, because it does not exist by itself but by and in matter.

If form is called "more of a being" because it represents a certain perfection and beauty of matter, it should not be compared to matter; for heat is not called hotter than heat, nor a perfection more perfect than perfection. Therefore, if form is the perfection and beauty of matter, it should not be deemed more perfect or more beautiful such that it is called more of a being or substance for this reason.

Furthermore, if nature is correctly defined as the principle of motion and rest, specifically passive motion insofar as it is the act of being moved, then form surely is not nature; for we see many things naturally moving by sight: heavy elements move downwards, light ones upwards, some animals walk, others fly, some swim in water. These things, I say, are moved: but what is the moving principle? We see no external principle; therefore, it must be internal, either matter or form. But matter is moved, it does not move; it is a principle not of moving, but of being movable: thus, form must be the moving principle: hence, form is not nature if nature is correctly defined as the principle of motion insofar as it is the act of being moved, the

principle, I say, of being moved, by which natural things can be moved; however, form is a principle of action, not of passion: therefore, it is not nature as thus defined.

How then can form be more of a nature than matter, which truly, according to the given definition, is nature? This query underscores the philosophical challenge of reconciling Aristotle's conception of form as both a principle of natural entities and as a secondary or derivative aspect reliant on matter for its manifestation, ultimately questioning the consistency of Aristotle's metaphysical framework.

It remains, therefore, for us to say that we truly do not know what this blessed form is, this blessed principle, whether it is something that exists or nothing, a substance or an accident, a body or a spirit. If it is some kind of being, it will either be a substance or an accident; yet it cannot be set as the principle of substance, for it is posterior; all substance is either corporeal or incorporeal. If form is an incorporeal spirit, how does it give rise to corporeal existence? Cold things cannot produce heat, nor can dark and shadowy things produce light and clarity. If it is corporeal, every body is composed of matter and form: this would then lead to an infinite regress. If someone claims that form and matter are divisions of perfect substances, and that matter and form themselves are imperfect substances: why then is form considered more a substance in the composite, and a part naturally more perfect than the whole? If the composite is a more perfect substance, it must fall under one part or the other of the division of substance.

If someone says that form is naturally incorporeal and uncompounded, lest there be principles of principles, and corporeal by virtue of matter: indeed, even matter is not a body, otherwise it too would be composite and the same absurdity follows. If both, form and matter, are naturally incorporeal: then the body consists of incorporeal things. Where then does the corporeality of the

composite arise, if both principles are incorporeal? Perhaps from the efficient cause. But I ask: from where does this efficient cause derive the corporeality, by which bodies differ substantially from spirits? From nothing, or from something? If from nothing: how does substance arise from nothing? If from something: what is that? The potentiality of matter. But this, I say, what is it? Something, or nothing? If nothing in act, but something in potentiality: then the potentiality will itself be something, and we go on infinitely; or ultimately, substance is naturally made from nothing. If it is something in act, what is it? A substance or an accident? If an accident: how does substance arise from an accident? If it is an actual substance, I ask: is it corporeal or incorporeal? If it is a composite body, what will it be? If not a body, then bodies will consist of incorporeal and spiritual matter and will not be bodies.

The emptiness of Aristotle's third principle, namely that of matter itself, also becomes apparent from this discussion. What, then, is this blessed, simple, incorporeal matter from which all things are made? The Peripatetic school posits two types of matter: primary and secondary. Primary matter is that which the substantial forms of the elements clothe; secondary matter, on the other hand, is from which the various mixtures are generated, namely the mass of elements—earth, water, air, and fire. Primary matter itself is scarcely comprehensible; Aristotle, in defining it, said that it is "neither what, nor how, nor how much, nor anything else that exists," but is pure potentiality and the first subject, from which all things are made and into which all things ultimately resolve. However, this unknown and imperceptible matter he proved only by analogy with art, not nature; for art operates around some subject, and whatever is made by art must necessarily be made from some subject; similarly, it is thought, in nature. But how does it follow: there is a subject in art, therefore also in nature? What kind of demonstration is this?

The Peripatetic school insists that this primary matter must exist for many reasons. Firstly, from the transformation of elements, as when water turns into air or fire. Since all transformation occurs from one opposite to another, a middle subject is needed, distinct from both the corrupted and the generated form, which was first without the latter, now without the former; also because every natural being both acts and is acted upon: it is impossible for the same thing in the same respect to both act and be acted upon: therefore, it must act according to form, and be acted upon according to matter. Moreover, in generation and corruption, something must always exist from which natural things are generated, since they are not made from nothing, and into which corrupted things resolve, since beings do not vanish into nothing; and finally, because natural entities have subsistence: not from forms, which require a subject in which they reside: therefore, from matter. We may grant all this; what then? Does primary matter therefore exist? How does it follow? The mass of elements suffices; for both denser and more spiritual substances are given: the former active, the latter more passive. If this suffices for the generation of things, why is there a need for that primary matter? Indeed, the entire Peripatetic school concedes that the generation of all natural things occurs from the mixture of elements.

The argument that primary matter is necessary due to the alternation and transformation of elements—where water becomes air, air becomes fire, and vice versa—merits further scrutiny. Let's test this assertion against the anvil of truth. In Peripatetic theory, elements are either compatible, like water and air, air and fire, or incompatible, like water and fire. If the mutual generation of elements necessitates positing this incorporeal primary matter as the resolution point for the elements, must it be posited for the generation of all elements, both compatible and incompatible, or only some? If only some, which ones: compatible or incompatible? It does not seem necessary for all.

For example, when moist water transforms into moist fire, it is not necessary for its moisture to be destroyed but rather enhanced and perfected in the matter. Similarly, when air transforms into fire, it is not necessary for the heat in the air to cease in the original matter, just as when a cold body heats up, the intensifying heat is augmented by the incoming heat, not destroyed. Therefore, when air becomes water, or fire becomes air, it is not only the bare matter that remains but also the qualities of moisture and heat. If in the generation of these compatible elements even the qualities are corrupted, how are they corrupted if they do not possess opposite but rather similar and compatible qualities? For corruption must necessarily occur by something completely opposite, not by something similar: cold is corrupted by heat, not by cold; similarly, heat is destroyed by cold, not by heat.

If these transformations are due to a deficiency in the substantial form, then these accidents must pertain more to matter than to form, like heat in boiling water. If water by its nature and form is very cold, then this heat must be an accident of the matter. Therefore, when the proper subject remains and there is no opposite present to expel it, how does it cease to be? In compatible elements, therefore, this resolution does not go down to the primary bare matter; the compatible qualities remain.

Indeed, in terms of corporeal size, all elements are compatible; all bodies, regardless of some being denser and others more subtle, are still bodies, and no one body is more or less of a body than another; for quantity does not admit of more or less, nor does it have an opposite that could destroy it. Thus, the matter of the elements is never bare, it never ceases to be a body; but at times it is denser, at other times more subtle, as we see when water turns into air—it does not cease to be a body, but becomes a more subtle body endowed with different qualities by an agent. Therefore, when elements are generated from each other, what we observe with our senses is not

the creation of a body from a non-body, but rather a denser body becoming more subtle, or a more subtle body becoming denser, endowed by their agents with different powers and qualities. Hence, this matter is never bare, never incorporeal, never resolved into this bare and incorporeal state in any generation.

If someone asserts that by its nature matter is incorporeal but always clothed in corporeal magnitude, this would be a most beautiful doctrine of philosophy, wherein what is by nature one way never enjoys its right: as if fire, by nature hot, never heats; the sun, luminous, never shines; the sky, mobile, never moves; the earth, resting, is always in motion; water and air, always moist, are forever oppressed by dryness. What then is this doctrine: that matter is by nature incorporeal, yet always formed with corporeality, never bare?

Exploring the generation of incompatible elements from one another further complicates the concept of primary matter according to Aristotle's framework. Let's consider incompatible elements: they are generated and corrupted from each other; does the resolution occur back to this primary matter directly, do fire and water generate from each other directly, or through an intermediary like air? If indirectly through an intermediary, it is not incompatible element generating from incompatible directly, but rather compatible from compatible; thus, resolution to bare matter never occurs because a compatible quality remains. If fire's form directly follows water's form without any mediating qualities: either the matter remains bare for a period without any form at all, or at the same instant, in the same subject, the opposite forms of fire and water coexist in the matter. Generation does not occur instantaneously; no motion occurs in an instant, all occurs over time.

When an incompatible element generates from another, the prior form either corrupts before the arrival of the new form, after, or simultaneously at the same instant. If before: then matter must have

remained for a time without any form; if after: then the same subject was simultaneously water and fire; if simultaneously: then generation and corruption occurred instantly, and it would be simultaneously water and not water, fire and not fire, with the new form arriving without any preparatory dispositions of the matter. If preparatory and arranging qualities were involved between these opposing forms, then resolution to primary matter certainly did not occur in this generation; before this opposite form activated the matter, arranging qualities were already present.

Thus, Aristotelian matter might seem almost like a poetic fiction, akin to Proteus, who constantly assumed different forms and shapes, or like the mythical water of the Amelitae, which could never be contained in any vessel. This analogy emphasizes the elusive and constantly transforming nature of primary matter in Aristotle's theory, challenging its practical applicability and conceptual coherence when considering the dynamics of elemental transformation.

Indeed, understanding the essence of this so-called blessed matter, or determining which category it should be placed in, is hardly conceivable to the mind. It is described as being neither what, how, how much, nor anything else that exists. Yet, the entire Peripatetic school declares it to be a substance. But what kind of substance can it be if, by its nature, it is neither corporeal nor incorporeal? If it is a body, then it is composed of something else; if it is an incorporeal being, then bodies are composed of incorporeal matter—hence, where does corporeality come from? From the potentiality of matter. But what is this potentiality? Is it the matter itself, something of it, or nothing? If it is the matter itself, then it is also incorporeal; if it is something of the matter, then the matter is composite; if it is nothing, then something is made from nothing. For if this potentiality is some kind of being, it must be either an accident or a

substance; and if it is a substance, it must be either corporeal or incorporeal, leading to the same absurdities.

However, those devoted to the Peripatetic school and who wish to be seen as staunch Aristotelians say that matter is pure potentiality capable of all forms, and therefore by its nature, it has no form of its own. But I ask: what does it mean for primary matter to be pure potentiality for all forms? Why is it called potentiality? Is it because it can receive all forms from agents, or because it can of its own nature produce all forms like a tree produces fruit from its root? If it is because it can be made and acted upon into all forms by its nature from agents, then it is more accurate to say that form is potentially present; before it is generated it does not exist but can exist, because it can be produced by some agent; for before it is generated, it is only potentially existent, actually nothing; while matter is always something in act, if only slightly.

Exploring further, is this primary matter naturally predisposed equally to all forms, like wax to the impression of a seal, or is it more disposed to some forms than to others? If equally predisposed: why does it receive the form of one element and not another, or one compound—stone, metal, plant, animal—and not another? If it has a greater natural disposition to one form over another, and is not equally ready for all, then it receives the form of earth here, water there, elsewhere air, or fire. This suggests that by its very nature, it is not simple but composite, with predispositions that precede and prepare it for the primary forms of the elements.

If the diversity of forms is attributed to active causes: when these agents act on the same matter, supposedly equally prepared to receive all forms, and induce various elemental or compound forms onto it, do they engage bare matter or matter already endowed with forms? If it is bare: then at times matter actually exists without any form; if endowed with various and opposing forms: do these diverse

and opposing forms enter immediately and instantaneously, or through mediating dispositions and over time? If instantly and immediately: then motion and generation occur instantaneously, and at one instant, the same matter will exist under contrary substantial forms and will simultaneously be water and fire; if through mediating dispositions and time—as otherwise, an animal would form from matter immediately and a human would be generated instantly—: then matter is never uncompounded, even before the primary elemental forms. If, however, potentiality is said to be effective, such that it can produce all forms from itself, it becomes not a passive but an active principle. But every agent acts through a form: thus, it itself would naturally have its own form. Yet we observe through the sense of sight that all forms are produced by agents, like the impression of a seal in wax, the likeness of a king on a coin, or the form of fire in wood.

Finally, why is it necessary for matter to be completely formless, in order to receive all forms? I ask, if matter had its own form, could it not accept subsequent forms that come along? Is it necessary for the elements also to be formless, so they can take on the forms of all mixtures? But someone might say: the elements do not remain in the mixture except potentially; that is, their matter remains, not their form. Yet I will argue: has it been demonstrated that the elements do not remain in the mixture, just as units in a number, letters in a word, or stones and wood in a building? By what demonstration is it known that they do not remain? If the forms do not remain, how do the qualities and conditions of the elements, such as heat, cold, moisture, and dryness, remain in the mixture? For the senses demonstrate that these do remain; indeed, we experience in mixtures the tangible qualities of the elements. Therefore, if the qualities remain unchanged in the mixture, why not the forms as well? And if the forms do not remain, whence come these qualities in the mixture? From what are they produced? Not from themselves: for

nothing generates itself; nor from matter: for it undergoes, not acts. If not from the forms, then from what are they produced? How, also, are mixtures moved by the motion of the predominant element, such as stones, metals, and others of that kind, if the elements do not remain? Likewise, how are mixtures eventually dissolved back into elements? Are the elements newly generated in the dissolution of mixtures? But by whom are they generated? Therefore, if the elements do remain in the mixture, as many from the Peripatetic school in the Senate agree, it is not necessary for them to be completely formless and totally lacking in bodily form: why then must matter be such? If the forms of the elements do not hinder the forms of mixtures, why would matter hinder them, being much more subtle and much simpler? For the forms of the elements, aside from their magnitude and bodily mass, have active or passive qualities. But if to matter only the form of corporeity is attributed, it will be much more subtle and finer. Why then would it hinder incoming forms, if the forms of the elements do not at all? Clearly, the white color of glass in spectacles due to extreme thinness, and likewise the color of water and air, do not impede vision, so that it can perceive all colors; nor must a man endowed with a very keen sense of touch be devoid of all qualities of touch, and stripped of all heat and cold, in order to perceive all these by touch and to judge truly and without error about them; for these in man, being subtle and fine, do not at all hinder the sense from their precise perception.

Therefore, that reasoning is futile, lightweight, and vain, arguing that matter must necessarily be completely formless and entirely stripped of all corporeal magnitude, so that in its bosom it can receive all forms and be the simple, permanent substrate and receptacle of all. For the simple, thin, and exceedingly fine form of corporeity does not impede this at all and is indivisible from it, nor does it ever, like matter itself, get generated or corrupted, but remains perpetually; yet it becomes now denser, now more subtle, at times more expanded, at

times more contracted, clothed with various qualities, forms, and figures by different agents, just as wax is impressed with various seals, or gold is shaped into various vessels by a craftsman, and the same clay is adorned by a potter with different forms, figures, and colors.

Thus, since the true principles of natural beings, from which they are constituted, ought to be truly beings, not accidents but substance; not incorporeal, but corporeal; not transient, but permanent; not naturally generated, but ungenerated, and true causes of existence for beings that are naturally generated; it is clear that these Aristotelian principles must be deposed from the tribunal of principles. For privation is not something among beings, but non-being and nothing; form, on the other hand, is either not substance or, if it is, it is not corporeal, permanent, or ungenerated, as sense itself clearly demonstrates; and matter, since no actual being is posited, is neither what, nor what kind, nor how much, but rather a pure potentiality, nearly nothing, never known by sense, nor perceived by intellect or imagination. It is truly unworthy to occupy the throne of principality and to hold the scepter and crown, unless corporeal substance is posited.

Therefore, the divinely wise Moses, setting forth only two principles of natural things, posited entities that exist by themselves, are corporeal, permanent, naturally ungenerated, and cause beings that are generated by nature to exist, attributing the whole of existence, saying: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." To this alluding and as if declaring his mind, the wisest Solomon said: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose; going forth from the south and turning about unto the north, the wind goeth about continually, and on its circuits the wind returneth again." He established the generations of things between the earth and the sun

and the heaven; and the earth, remaining perpetually immobile, and the sun and the whole heaven continuously moving, generates all things.

Since the earth by its nature is nothing else but dry dust, from which none of the things that are generated by nature can be formed in any way without the mixture of moisture, just as neither can simple flour without the mixture of water ever become bread, nor can a potter ever form any vessel from dry and unmoistened clay; hence Moses, to the earth which is by nature most dry, adds the moisture of water, saying: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." And by the name of the deep, a multitude of waters is understood; hence it follows: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Hence, Moses calls the things that are generated by nature the fruits of the heaven, the earth, and the deep in the blessing of Joseph, saying: "Of the blessing of the Lord his land, of the fruits of heaven with the dew and the deep lying beneath, of the fruits of the sun and the moon, of the top of the ancient mountains, of the fruits of the everlasting hills, and of the produce of the earth, and its fullness." The fruits of heaven and earth which are generated by nature are said by Moses to have their origin and existence from these principles. But, because the earth can by its nature produce nothing at all except when arranged with aqueous moisture, hence also he made mention of the dew and the deep.

But it may seem to someone that, if water is necessary for the generation of things, there should be three principles: heaven, earth, and water: why then did Moses posit only two: heaven and earth? But clearly, things that occur naturally are not generated from water, but originate from the bowels of the earth. Water, however, is required as a certain arrangement, just as we do not say bread is made from water, but from flour mixed and prepared with water; likewise, vessels made by a potter are not made from water but from clay tempered with water.

Therefore, the earth is the principle from which entities that consist of nature are made, and water is required for its arrangement. Thus, it is right for Moses to have established only heaven and earth as the principles; these indeed, as extremes, are also the simply first bodies of this world. For water is not first; it is a body made from these and generated by nature, just like air; for the generation of these is most evident: water by heat is turned into the thinness of air, and air by being condensed by cold passes into the thickness of water. Water also, when excessively compressed by cold, turns into ice, ice into stone, and stone dissolves into dust and earth; and each thing by its nature resolves back into that from which it was first generated and made.

Thus, God first made these two bodies, heaven and earth, and then immediately brought forth waters from the bowels of the earth. Hence God Himself says to Job: "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth as if it had issued out of the womb, when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it?" Therefore, the entire abyss of waters burst forth from the bowels of the earth from the beginning, as if a child proceeding from the womb of its mother, just as we still continually see springs and rivers arise from the very crevices of the earth.

That the earth can be liquefied into water by the heat of the sun, just as glasses and metals melt in fire, which also, like lead and others, are dissolved into smoke and airy thinness by the heat of fire, although we do not see this with these eyes, reason nonetheless demonstrates. Indeed, it is evident that salt is formed by the sun in many lands, even those far from and very high above the sea. For there is no other cause by which this happens, other than the earth and the heat of the sun; and indeed, all salt can be dissolved into waters. Therefore, just as water made thinner by heat passes into air, so too does earth into water, and just as water itself, frozen by cold

and endowed with thick density, again turns into the substance of earth.

Fire, too, just as it turns water into the finest vapors, so it resolves any other bodies, however dense with earthiness, into gases, which, when compressed by excessive cold, are most easily turned into water. Therefore, rightly did the divine Moses not establish the watery body among the principles; for it is not a primary and ungenerated body, but is made from the first principles, heaven and earth, with the earth providing substance and the heaven providing nature and qualities.

But just as he connected watery moisture to the earth, so he attributed motion and light to the heaven, which by acting upon the earth generates beings: "The Spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters" and God said: "Let there be light," and there was light. By the term 'Spirit,' as we will discuss more broadly in a treatise on motion, is meant the heaven, which, once created, began to move by its nature; and to motion, he immediately added light. For by light, as we perceive through our senses, the heaven acts most profoundly and primarily upon the earth, generating all beings. Hence, He says: "And God saw the light that it was good." Indeed, light is good for the generation and preservation of all things that consist by nature; and from the heaven, we see with these eyes all light arises. This light, just as now, so then by the motion of heaven carried around, made day and night; for it says: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." From these indeed, that is, from heaven endowed with light and motion, and the earth prepared with watery moisture, we clearly see that all things which consist by nature are made, with these eyes as witnesses.

However, just as watery moisture is not some other being distinct from the nature of the earth, so too light is not other than the substance of the heaven, but the heaven is to be considered naturally

luminous. And if the divine Moses says that God called the light day and the darkness night, this statement must only be understood causally by us; for light is not day, but the presence of light is the cause of day; nor are darkness night, but the obscurity and shadow of darkness make night: that the day is made solely by the very luminous substance of the heaven is beyond doubt. Thus, then, by the command of God, the luminous substance of the heaven and the motion of the heaven carried out those first three days.

Although it may seem very difficult to assert this from the words of Moses, as he seems to say that heaven was created first and then light, and that heaven is not luminous by its nature but translucent and clear, like an airy body; however, if the context of Moses' words is closely examined, his divine intention and purpose immediately become clear.

For immediately after that initial thesis proposed: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the Divine Poet added that the earth was "without form, and void," that is, according to the Septuagint Interpreters, invisible and unformed; and "darkness was upon the face of the deep." God Himself explains to Blessed Job what these darknesses are, saying: "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth, as if it had issued out of the womb; when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it?" Therefore, there were darknesses upon the face of the deep, namely over the earth and the waters made from it, because black clouds and dense fogs covered its entire face. Since the earth by its nature is opaque, dark, and shadowy, the mother of shadows and all darkness and night, it always remains clothed and covered with a black and very dark veil of darkness, unless some light shines upon it from heaven; then indeed, when no light could shine through because of the black clouds and dense fogs, darkness covered the face of the deep. Thus, darkness came upon Egypt, not because there was no light in the sky, but because black clouds and dreadful fogs

covered the earth; similarly, darkness occurred over the whole earth at the time of Christ's death; and it also happens by common experience when, with thick vapors from the earth clouding the sky and dense clouds and dark mists covering the earth, excessive darkness and shadows occur in our world; afterwards, however, when the clouds are thinned out, dispersed by the wind, or emptied by rain, light from the sky again shines brightly and clearly.

Therefore, with this statement: "Darkness was upon the face of the deep," Moses did not deny light to the entire world completely, but only to the earth, because the light of heaven did not shine upon it due to the excessive fogs. Hence, he did not simply say that darkness covered the face of the universe, but only that darkness was upon the face of the deep. Therefore, when he subsequently added that God said let there be light, by the name of this light nothing else is to be understood but a certain clarity and brilliance of the sky over the earth, to which the darkness of shadows is naturally opposed. From this he says that he called the light day and the darkness night and that he separated light from darkness; they are divided by nature, origin, location, time, and action.

Nor should it be thought that by these words, the creator of the universe created light anew: for he created it with the heaven, for light is as natural to heaven as opacity and darkness are to the earth; but he only commanded that, once those thick vapors were thinned, the light of heaven might pour its splendors upon the earth. Thus, the luminous substance, which is the perpetual cause and perennial source of all clarity in the world, was created in the beginning; indeed, this truly is the first body, which is considered the principle of other entities.

Here, Solomon, evidently also using sensory perception, posits the sun as the principle of generation, saying: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose; there it renews, circling to the south and bending to the north." Subsequently, he adds about the heavens: "The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to its circuits." For this reason, Moses himself in the blessing of Joseph refers to the fruits of the sun and the moon as those that are naturally generated. Indeed, the rest of the celestial body is created by the supreme craftsman solely for this luminous substance, which is posited as the principle of all natural entities, to serve as its tabernacle and dwelling. Thus the Royal Psalmist, inspired by the Divine Spirit, says; where we read in the Psalm: "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun," the Hebrew Truth states: בָּהֶם לְשֶׁמֶשׁ שָׁם-אֵהָל (Lascemesc scam hoel bahem.): "He hath set a tabernacle in them for the sun, in the heavens," of which he was speaking: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." And as Solomon says, that the sun rises and sets as the cause of the generation of things, the Royal Psalmist, his father, having stated that God has set a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens, then adds saying: "And he is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Therefore, three attributes are ascribed to this celestial substance: light, heat, and motion, which seem to be characteristic of fire; for fire, as is evident through sensation, naturally appears to be mobile, hot, and luminous. Therefore, if the sun is considered a fiery substance, earth and fire will be the first two bodies, constituting the principles of all things that consist by nature. These indeed are endowed with highly contrasting qualities; fire by its nature is mobile, earth is immobile; fire is thin, earth is dense; fire is sharp,

earth is dull; fire is hot, earth is cold; fire is luminous, earth is opaque and dark; fire is entirely active, earth is primarily passive.

Now, therefore, it must be asked whether the sun, which presents itself to our senses as very similar to fire, is truly fiery by its nature, as Plato and all of antiquity maintained, or not at all, as Aristotle and his entire school opine and teach. For if this opinion's doctrine is true, it would be in vain that we, along with Moses, try to establish heaven and earth as the principles and causes of natural entities. However, it will be worthwhile to examine Aristotle's reasons and signs with which he has tried to assert that the sun does not consist of a fiery nature.

He indeed proves this primarily by the argument taken from motion; and also by the sign of the white and bright color. He also argues that if the entire heaven were fiery, it would have long ago destroyed all lower bodies. The argument from motion is that if the sun and the heavens consisted of a fiery nature, they would move upwards in a straight line, not perpetually in a circle. He assumes, however, that every body by nature is mobile, since nature is the principle of motion; and that a simple body should have a simple motion; simple motion is indeed straight, either upwards from the center or downwards towards the center, another is in a circle around the center. And straight motion is suitable for heavy things: earth and water; upwards from the center, for light things: air and fire; but the heavens move around the center. If the heavens are by nature light and fiery, they will be moved in a circle by force; but no violent motion is perpetual. If this motion is contrary to its nature, another according to its nature must be given; but no other simple motion is available except straight. Naturally, therefore, it will move either upwards or downwards; but both are inappropriate. Therefore, the motion itself shows Aristotle that the heavens are by no means fiery, but a fifth kind of substance beyond the elements, devoid of the nature and qualities of the elements.

Indeed, these foundations laid by Aristotle must be tested against the fire of truth to see whether they are gold or lead. First of all, his statement that every body is mobile, because nature is the principle of motion, is far from the truth. For nature is not only the principle of motion but also of rest and immobility; the earth, being a natural body, enjoys no motion according to place at all, but perpetual immobility. If it remains immobile by force, then something violent is perpetual. Nor does it naturally move according to place; for if it did, being contrary to the world, it would certainly be carried upwards, which is contrary to the nature of heavy things.

Indeed, Aristotle himself in his writings on the heavens clearly decides and proves that the earth must be immobile, since it is the center of the world and it is necessary, as he says, for something in the middle of a body in a circle to remain immobile. But he says the earth moves downward in parts. In homogeneous and similar bodies, the nature of the whole and the parts is the same. If it is said that the parts move contrary to nature, then a motion according to nature must be given. Therefore, the earth by its nature will be both mobile and immobile, having the principle of perpetual mobility and likewise perpetual immobility: thus endowed with contrary natures; for motion and immobility are opposites and occur from opposite causes: indeed, water when heated becomes more vigorous and lighter, moves upwards by boiling; but when compressed by cold, it becomes immobile.

If it is permissible for an honest philosopher to assert that a natural and simple body is endowed with opposing and conflicting natures and a perpetually violent state, then Aristotle may be left unchallenged in positing the earth as both perpetually mobile and perpetually immobile. If it is perpetually immobile, why does it always rest? Because it is in its proper place. Yet, the heavens also occupy their proper place, but they are always in motion, continuously and unceasingly performing their own operation. If the

earth is likewise mobile by its nature, it must also always be moving and performing its own operation; the proper place does not hinder this, but rather facilitates it. Therefore, the earth is not mobile by its nature but immobile, with no capability of moving itself by its nature and form; if its parts, when forcibly removed from it and propelled upwards, are carried back to it by rapid motion without any external push, this should not be attributed to any natural power by which the earth can move itself, but to its impotence, because a body endowed with excessive density has no capability whatsoever to sustain itself aloft unless it adheres to some firm and stable thing, as to a base and foundation. Therefore, this motion is not some natural operation, but rather a fall and a defect of the thing; thus we say that buildings collapse and fall, and heavy objects fall due to excessive material density, which should not be considered as moving, since they have no force whatsoever to move themselves, but by their nature remain always immobile.

Indeed, Aristotle's assertion that motion is contrary to motion, specifically that the motion away from the center for light objects is contrary to the motion towards the center for heavy objects, does not hold true. The tendency of heavy objects toward the center is not truly motion in the proper sense of a natural operation, but rather a fall due to dense matter. Since all motion is caused by a single factor, namely heat, contrary and opposing motions cannot exist within themselves; for opposites must have contrary causes, and a single entity cannot be contrary to itself nor consist of opposing natures. Therefore, since all motion comes from the same cause, one cannot be contrary to another. Thus, Aristotle's argument rests on false foundations. Furthermore, it is not simply true that a simple body is owed a simple motion. Indeed, stones, metals, and other bodies move downward rapidly just as clods of earth do, even though they are not simple bodies.

But reason itself is of no avail. For why, if the heavens were fiery, would it be carried upwards, and not in a circle? For if fire by its own nature is both mobile and hot, it will always and everywhere be mobile and will be perpetually agitated by motion. However, perpetual motion cannot exist except in a circle; because that which moves upwards or downwards cannot be moved perpetually, since the space is bounded by limits. Therefore, the proper motion of fire is not straight but circular: the latter, not the former, can be perpetual; indeed, the element of fire placed above the sphere of air by Aristotle, is perpetually moved in a circle, and so too is the upper portion of the air, as the motion of comets shows. But if that motion is not natural, how can it be perpetual? For things that are against nature cannot last long but must at some time perish. Therefore, the motion that must be considered proper to fire is the one it performs in its own place perpetually, not the one it performs when placed outside its own universe, as it hastens back to its homeland and flies. For even if a portion of the heavens were placed outside its own universe and location, it would certainly hasten as quickly as possible and most perilously fly upwards to its natural place. Nevertheless, the proper motion of the heavens is not straight, but circular. If a spherical rather than a pyramidal shape is attributed to fire in its own sphere and proper universe, even though it appears pyramidal outside it: why should a straight motion be attributed to it, which it has outside its own universe, and not a circular one, by which it is perpetually moved in its own sphere? Thus, Aristotle incorrectly attributed these natural motions to fire and earth from the motions of particulars, when they are carried outside their own universes and places to their proper homes and dwellings.

That argument, which asserts that if the heavens were fiery it would have consumed all bodies beneath it like a torch, is utterly empty. Indeed, fire burns less in thin and delicate material: it burns less in a flame than in a glowing coal, and in this again less than in glowing

iron. Therefore, since the substance of the heavens is thin, extremely subtle, and highly expanded, it will also be endowed with a thin and delicate heat; not a burning heat, otherwise, since Aristotle himself places the sphere of fire above that of air, and the sphere of air is tenfold and much larger, why has it not ultimately consumed all the air and turned it into fire, since it could easily convert air, as a kindred element, into itself? Therefore, due to the extreme thinness and expansion, the celestial substance, although warm and fiery, does not burn: just like a ray of the sun, which, although hot, does not burn because of the thin and expanded nature of the air. But if it passes through a glass vessel full of pure and clear water and is concentrated within itself, it burns and ignites fire, just as it does when reflected in concave mirrors.

Finally, the signs that are brought forth, from the solidity and the speed of moving stars, are so far from proving Aristotle's assertion that they actually suggest the opposite. Since these meteors are nothing other than ignited vapors and ignited exhalations, it can be inferred from them that the stars of the entire heavens consist of a fiery nature, as these moving stars provide a specimen of them and present every similarity: and the body beneath the heavens, in which these phenomena occur and are observed, is by its nature very similar to the upper body, in which the stars are seen, in the same way.

Similarly, the brightness of the sun, which persuaded Aristotle to believe that the solar substance was not at all endowed with a fiery nature, to us, shows more the opposite than his proposition. Indeed, a pure and vigorous flame of fire is very bright and very similar to the sun; likewise, light passing through a vial filled with water becomes very bright, as if reflecting the sun in a way that dazzles weak eyes, and ignites fire. But perhaps the flame of fire in Aristotle's time was of a different color, displaying no brightness, no splendor, or light; in our times, however, the light of fire is also as

bright as that of the sun, and the brightness of both the sun and fire seems to be a natural color. Therefore, since the sun, by the testimony of the senses, shines like fire, is bright, splendid, moves, warms, and naturally produces all the effects of fire, there is no reason or argument why it should not be fiery and why the entire heavens should not be endowed with the same nature.

Thus, Divine Moses, placing heaven and earth as the [principles] of all beings that are subject to birth and decay, established fire and earth as the first of all bodies. Since these bodies are most opposed, the former being the highest, most noble, transparent, luminous, mobile, thin, subtle, and sharp; the latter being the lowest, base, opaque, dark, immobile, thick, dull, and the least of beings, it seems utterly reasonable and appropriate to consider, just as the heavens are by nature fiery and very warm, so too should the earth be considered by its nature extremely cold; since it inherently possesses no warmth at all and is farthest from the heavens, the parent of all heat, it must be deemed extremely cold. This is also demonstrated by its heaviness and density; for cold causes these effects: it condenses air, by nature light and thin, into heavy water, and compresses this further into ice and turns it into stone. Therefore, since the earth is by far the thickest, densest, and heaviest of all, this can only arise from its extreme and intense cold.

Since even in other respects these two are most opposed, it is necessary that they are extremely different and endowed with completely contrary qualities. However, the quality contrary to heat is nothing but cold; if not the earth, what other entity would be the parent of all coldness? Water indeed cannot be the most ungrateful, just as fire cannot be the coldest; for water is not perfected by cold as fire is by heat, but is harmed and corrupted, turned into ice, stone, and earth; whereas earth is not at all harmed by cold, but is preserved, increased, and becomes more and more substantial and perfected, just as fire is by heat; and just as fire perishes by cold, so

too the earth is consumed by heat and becomes increasingly thinner and decays. But everything that is harmed and led to destruction can only suffer this from its opposite. If one were to say that water, especially, extinguishes fire and leads it to destruction as if from something very contrary, clearly not less so does hot and boiling water extinguish fire than cold or icy water. Nor does wine, naturally warm, or any other body endowed with some density, do this less than water. For since fire naturally enjoys thinness, it is oppressed and as if suffocated by an overlying thickness, and thus expires; and earth, by its nature much more potent than water, is more capable of killing fire, although water or any other more liquid body does it more quickly. Since the pores of a fiery body are open, a liquid density fills them more easily and thus more quickly shuts off and kills the fire: which earth, being too dull and too dense, cannot do. Therefore, water does not extinguish fire due to its great coldness, since hot water acts no less effectively: but because its density oppresses and suffocates the thinness of fire. Thus, it is not water, but earth that is extremely cold, just as fire is extremely hot.

Therefore, dividing the entire corporeal mass into two parts, heaven and earth, Divine Moses teaches that the former is endowed with the utmost heat, while the latter with the utmost cold; for that reason, the former is perpetually mobile, thin, and sharp: whereas the latter is immobile, thick, and dull.

Just as it is reasonable to infer the coldness of the earth from the heat of the heavens, so it seems consistent to argue from the innate and inherent dryness of the earth—and indeed the utmost dryness, for there is nothing drier or ever more arid than earth—the utmost humidity of the heavens: they must necessarily be endowed with contrary qualities to each other. By humid, I mean not moistening and wetting; for this is proper to water and other bodies that are naturally liquid and endowed with a certain soft density and a flowing liquidity; but I speak of a body that is humid in that it is

difficult to confine within its own boundary but easily confined by another's, such as air, which is considered most humid, and the nature of air is most similar to that of the heavens; therefore, by the same name of heaven, Moses always denotes the substance of both.

And nothing about this position is impeded by the fact that the heavens are by nature fiery; for fire is not dry, as it is thought to be, because it seems to dry out earthly things, but it does not actually dry them out, rather it reveals pre-existing dryness. If the earth is by its nature extremely dry and exceedingly arid, how can it possibly be dried out further? But the fire, which seems to dry out these bodies, converts their finer parts into the most moist and thinnest vapors, demonstrating the pre-existing dryness and hardness of the bodies. Other bodies, which are not earth, it does not dry out at all, but rather makes them more humid. For it turns water into fine vapors and into very moist air; and if an airy body is considered very humid because it is very thin, resists nothing to the touch, and is easily confined by another's boundary, since fire by its nature is much thinner and more spiritual than air, why should it not also be considered more humid?

If the effect always emanates from a similar cause, light from the luminous, heat from the hot, cold from the cold, and since fire is the cause of humidity, not dryness, it must indeed be considered humid, not dry. For even if it seems to dry out earthly bodies, it does not truly dry them, but reveals the dryness inherent in the earth, which, being endowed with the utmost and greatest aridity, cannot be dried out any further, just as fire cannot be made hotter, since it is extremely hot and since the causes of contraries are contraries themselves; [since] cold is the cause of dryness, heat must necessarily be the cause of humidity, and since the coldest earth is extremely arid, the hottest fire must necessarily [be] extremely humid. Therefore, the fiery heavens are endowed with the utmost humidity, just as they are endowed with the utmost heat by their

nature; just as the earth, extremely cold by nature and the source of all cold, is extremely arid. But when we consider Divine Moses dividing the entire corporeal mass into heat and cold...

The rest is missing, including the treatise on motion that the author had promised above.

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
AND THE GLORIOUS VIRGIN MARY

Chapter One

Verse 1: In the beginning. In Hebrew: בְּרֵאשִׁית (**Bereshit**)

The Hebrews usually mark the books of the Holy Scripture with a triple inscription: either from the beginning of the book, from the subject, or from the author. Thus, the Book of Genesis is called בְּרֵאשִׁית (Bereshit) by them because it starts with these words by Moses, the author of the book. Similarly, Exodus is called שְׁמוֹת (Shemot); Leviticus: וַיִּקְרָא (Vayikra); and so all the books of the Pentateuch are named from their beginnings; likewise, the Book of Lamentations is titled אֵיכָה (Eicha). Concerning the author, all the books of the Prophets and the first two books of Kings, from Samuel, are called the books of Samuel, partly because they were written by him and partly because everything discussed in others are in some way related to him. Perhaps also the Book of Joshua, although the Hebrews disagree, it is most likely that Joshua penned the accounts of his deeds. Finally, from the subject, such as the Book of Judges, all the books of Solomon, and also the books of Chronicles and Kings. Therefore, Moses, who according to the opinion of all Hebrews, and also Basil the Great in the Hexaemeron, John Chrysostom on Genesis, and finally the common and equal consensus of all Doctors, was the author of this book and of the entire Pentateuch, wishing to convey the principles of faith which are derived from the beginnings of creation and the divine covenants with creation, began thus: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." There are only five words and they encompass and contain divine mysteries and marvelous sacraments; therefore, let us examine each word individually.

In the beginning: בְּרֵאשִׁית (Bereshit). The Septuagint translators, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated it as "In the beginning"; Aquila interprets it as "In the chapter"; the Chaldean interpreter has

it as *בְּקַדְמִין* (Bekadmin), in place of *בְּרֵאשִׁית* (Bereshit); *קַדְמִין* (Kadmin) however, signifies the beginning of time in Chaldean. The Second Chaldean Edition, which is called the Targum of Jerusalem, translates it as *בְּהֻכְמָה* (Behokhma), meaning "In wisdom." According to this sense, the error of the impious Manichean, who posited two principles of things: one of goods, the other of evils; one of spiritual, the other of corporeal things, is refuted, since here God is said in the beginning, that is, in the Son, to have created heaven and earth. And indeed, as the principle of effects is appropriated to the Father due to power, so the exemplar belongs to the Son due to wisdom, so that just as it is said, "You have made all things in wisdom," so it is understood that God created all things in the beginning, that is, in the Son.

However, this last interpretation is according to the meaning rather than the literal translation of the word, which remarkably supports Tertullian in the book *Against Praxeas*, Origen, Hilary, and Augustine, who think that this word should be explained as follows: In the beginning, that is, in the Son, who is the Word of the Father and Wisdom and the principle of all things, through whom all things were made, as shown in John 1, who also says of himself: I am the beginning, who also speak to you. This interpretation is also supported by what is said in the Psalms about himself: At the head of the book it is written about me, that is, in the beginning of Genesis; and according to this view, the word *בְּרֵאשִׁית* (Bereshit) could have been translated as: in the beginning, or with the beginning, and through the beginning; for these three ways the preposition "in" is understood among the Hebrews. The first interpretation is the primary and most frequent among them; the second is found in Isaiah 7: They shall go there with arrows and bow; the third, in Genesis: By myself I have sworn. Sacred theologians assert that God created the world in the Son, with the Son, and through the Son. Hence Paul to the Colossians says: For in

him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and in him.

However, the prior interpretation is more literal, meaning that we understand that at the beginning of time, God created heaven and earth; not that He created them in time, but at the very first instant of time, which cannot really be called time, but only the beginning of time. Just as the beginning of a line is not a line, so the beginning of time is not time; thus God created heaven and earth without any delay in time, so much so that the creation of things was completed in less than a moment. This is how Saint Basil explains it in the Hexaemeron; Saint Ambrose holds the same view in the first book of the Hexaemeron; this is also the interpretation of the Hebrews, who assert that this word should be understood as it is said: At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, at the beginning of the reign of Jeconiah, At the beginning of the reign of Joachim. This is found in the Hebrew Gloss, to which even Aben Ezra subscribes. According to this understanding, the error of Aristotle, who made the world coeternal with God, asserting that it neither had a beginning nor will have an end, is refuted.

Among the Greeks, there are also some, including Theodoret, who explain it thus: In the beginning, that is, firstly, God created heaven, before He established the rest. By this understanding, the error of those who impiously claimed that God created heaven and earth and other corporeal things through the agency of angels and other spiritual creatures is eliminated. For if He created heaven and earth first of all, there were no angels whose services He might use in the production of corporeal things: otherwise, not firstly, since spiritual creatures would have been first and would have preceded in their own era.

Nevertheless, this interpretation is contested by Rabbi Solomon the Hebrew, who states that בְּרֵאשִׁית does not indicate the order of creation by saying that these things preceded because, if he had intended to signify this, he would have said: בְּרֵאשִׁוֹנָה, "firstly," or "in the first place." However, he, along with Aben Ezra, says that the word בְּרֵאשִׁית is in the construct state of the genitive, thus to be understood as what is said: "in the beginning of creating God the heaven," or by which God created heaven and earth, the earth was, etc.; thus, through בְּרֵאשִׁית they explain the beginning of time, as it is said in Jeremiah: "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim," etc.

But if one considers the wisdom enclosed in this word, they will see in that expression a complete and explained rationale of the creation of the world and of all things. Indeed, from the decomposition of this word into elements and the various compositions of these with each other, the entire statement in Hebrew is woven from twelve names: בְּרֵא רֵאשׁ אֵשׁ שִׁית רַב אִישׁ בְּרִית הָבָה אֵב בְּכֹר רֵאשִׁית שְׁכֵת, that is: Father in the Son, or through the Son, or in the Son as beginning and end, created the head, fire, foundation of the great man by a good covenant. In the final word, the letter ט is changed to ת, which is very common among Hebrews for letters of the same pronunciation.

How wonderfully this first interpretation shines forth, that God the Father in the Son, or with the Son, or through the Son created the world! The Son, however, is called the beginning and the end, or the rest, according to the saying: I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. But what does this great man signify? The world itself. For just as man is a microcosm, so the world is a macrocosm. Hence, taking this opportunity, three worlds—the intellectual, the celestial, and the corruptible—are most aptly symbolized through the three parts of man. In man, the first part is the head; the second from the neck to the navel; the third extends to the feet. In the head is the brain, the source of knowledge; in the chest the heart, the source of movement, life, and heat; finally, in the

third, the genital organs, the beginning of generation. Similarly, in the world, the highest part is intellectual, created for understanding; the second part is the sky, the principle of motion, life, and heat; the part under the moon is most evidently subject to generation and corruption. Moses called the first the head, because it is the source of all knowledge; the second, fire, because the sky is thought to be of fiery nature; the third, the foundation of the great man, because through it the entire body of man is founded and sustained. But because there is among these a covenant of perpetual peace and friendship, hence he added: By a good covenant, of which covenant through Jeremiah the Lord says: If my covenant, that is, the covenant of peace and friendship, between day and night, and the laws of heaven and earth I have not set; which covenant is indeed good, because it directs us to God, who is goodness itself.

Created. In Hebrew: בָּרָא (Bara). In Chaldean: בֵּרָא (Bera).

It is the common opinion of all theologians that creation is a divine action by which something is produced out of nothing. This was also the opinion of some of the Hebrews, as reported by Aben Ezra:

Many commentators say that שֶׁהָבִי'אָה לְהוֹצִיא יֵשׁ (shehavi'ah lehotzi yesh me'ayin), creation is the production of something from nothing; and they distinguish between בָּרָא (bara), יָצַר (yatsar), and עָשָׂה (asah), to create, to form, and to make; to create, they say, is to make something from nothing; to form is to give shape to a created being; and to make is to organize the individual parts. Thus they explain this passage from Isaiah: And everyone who is called by my name, for my glory I have created him; I have formed him and made him; where in Hebrew these three words occur. Aben Ezra rebukes them, saying they have forgotten that it is said: God created the great sea creatures; and shortly thereafter: God created man; and in Isaiah: forming light and creating darkness, making peace and creating evil.

The word בָּרָא (Bara), the Septuagint translated as Ἐποίησεν, which means "he made," and thus it is read by the Greeks: Saint Basil in the Hexaemeron, John Chrysostom on Genesis, Origen, Athanasius, and several others; and also by the Latin Fathers, including Saint Ambrose.

Saint Augustine, addressing the aforementioned passage from Isaiah in the first book *Against the Calumniator of the Scriptures*, distinguishes between creating and making: that to create is properly to bring into being from something; whereas to make is from nothing. The Greek word corresponding to the act of creating is κτίζω, which also means to found, hence cities are said to be created; for Marcus Cicero calls Romulus the creator and prince of the city of Rome, as Augustine asserts in the aforementioned book. The word "create" also comes from the Greek word κρέας, which means flesh; hence to create is as it were to produce, or make flesh: in which sense animals are said to be procreated; and from this also comes "to grow," which is said not only of animals but also of plants and fruits; hence Marcus Cicero in *De Finibus* says, "Of all things, which nature creates and sustains." In general, therefore, this word, both among the Latins and the Hebrews, signifies the production of something new, whether it be from nothing or from something.

Rabbi David Kimhi in his book *Radicum*, explaining the difference between בָּרָא (bara, to create) and יָצַר (yatsar, to form), states that the latter is about physical entities, or those that exist in a body, or are receptive to sensory powers, or pertain to these sensory powers themselves; the former, however, pertains to any thing or the innovation of any thing that proceeds from non-existence to existence. Our interpreter also translates the passage from Numbers: אִם-בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא (im-beri'ah yivra), "If he creates a creature," as: "If he creates a new thing."

Although in the Scriptures, the meaning of this word is more frequently adapted to those things that are produced from something, especially when something is brought forth by the command of God from something else, as it is said that He created man, animals, plants, and other things by His command from some material: however, in this case, the production from nothing must be understood, whether it be called creation or making, as this is the first production, which presupposes no material. For this is not a physical generation, which occurs by natural potency through motion in time and necessarily presupposes a subject; but it is a metaphysical generation, which we here call creation, which, since it does not occur in time, nor does any alteration or transformation intervene, requires no subject.

Therefore, John Philoponus correctly interprets Aristotle, who, while denying that God is the maker of the world in the sense that He did not make it through change or transformation, should rather be described as a producer. For he says in "On Generation": "Aristotle never seems to have proposed that the cause of the world's creation was God. He asserts that to make is nothing else but to bring something into light in a certain way and by means of generation. But God does not operate in time, nor without sudden perfection. Therefore, he denies that God made the world, but rather it should be said that He produced it." What John Philoponus states here seems to align with our theological views. For when we say that the creation of the world is a production from nothing, we do not posit any subject that is the nothingness from which something comes: for this bears an obvious contradiction; but we understand the term 'from nothing' in a negative sense, that is, not from anything, without any pre-existing material, and this we attribute to the infinite power of God, who surpasses all art, all nature with His immense power. However, we do not deny that a certain passive potentiality might be considered in creatures before they were formed and existed in

themselves; for in a way they were in God, so that they might be produced and exist outside of Him.

It should be noted here that Moses, with these words, refutes the errors of three ethnic philosophers when he says that God created, that is, produced the world from nothing. First is Plato's position, which posited three eternal: God, the ideas, and ύλη (hyle), that is, matter, and he claimed that God made the world from such eternal matter. Aristotle asserted that the world was coeternal with God, yet dependent on God, without beginning or end. Epicurus and many others considered the void and atoms eternal, and at the beginning of nature, some atoms solidified into earth, others into water, air, and fire. For if He created, that is, produced from nothing, then He did not make it from uncreated matter, or from eternal atoms and the void; and if at the beginning of time, it dissolves the coeternity of the world.

God. In Hebrew: אֱלֹהִים (Elohim). In Chaldean: ܝܗ (Yah).

This word contains wonderful sacraments and great mysteries. Here, it is clearly evident to admire the immense power of God, the unity of His essence, and the trinity of divine Persons. For while it is said that He created the world at the beginning of time, it is thus clear that He existed eternally before time, and He who at the beginning of creation is declared to have created the heavens and the earth from nothing with such swift action, His omnipotence is indicated. To will to act is for Him, so that through the incomprehensible speed of operation, the incomprehensible Operator might be expressed, who completed such a great work in a brief and exceedingly short moment at the beginning of time, His operation concluding and the effects of His will preceding the sense of time.

Furthermore, it is important to know that the name of God, אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), as used here by Moses, is in the plural form, derived from אֵל (El), just as אֲדֹנָי (Adonai) is derived from אֲדֹן (Adon); this word

not only signifies God but also angels, heroic men, and rulers or judges, as well as distinguished men, as is evident even to those with a basic familiarity with the Sacred Scripture. However, we never use this name to denote a specific angel or man, but rather multiple individuals together. Some Hebrews, and also some of our own, deny that this word is in the plural form; but both are proven wrong; for it is quite clear in all places of Scripture, where it does not signify God, that it is always taken in a plural sense, as in the Psalm: "You have made him a little lower than the angels," where אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) stands for angels, and this is how the Chaldean Interpreter and the Septuagint translate it. In another Psalm, it says: "God stands in the divine assembly; He judges among the gods," where it stands for judges; and elsewhere: "You shall not revile the gods;" and again: "I said: You are gods." But they argue that, when it is used for the true God, it cannot signify in the plural; otherwise, it would not be joined with a singular verb, as it is said here: אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא (Elohim bara), "God created," and not "Gods created."

Indeed, on the contrary, in many places in the Sacred Scripture, where it signifies the true God, we observe the noun אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) used with a plural adjective and even a verb. For instance, in Genesis 20, where our version states: "After God had brought me out of my father's house," the Hebrew text reads: "After gods brought me out"; in 2 Kings, it is said: "What nation is there like your people Israel, a unique nation on the earth, for which God went to redeem for Himself..." the Hebrew text reads: "For which gods went." This cannot be said of Moses and Aaron, for in Chronicles the name of the Lord, the Tetragrammaton, is used. In Joshua, where it is said: "You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God," the Hebrew truth says: "For gods are holy." In Isaiah 54: "Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name," the Hebrew says: "Your makers, your lords"; there again, the name Tetragrammaton is used. Similarly, in Jeremiah 23: "You have perverted the words of

the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God," the Hebrew reads: "Living gods," where again the name Tetragrammaton is repeatedly placed.

Indeed, Aben Ezra acknowledges that the name אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) signifies in the plural when it is used for God, but he explains this as a convention of the holy language, for the sake of reverence and honor, similar to how in the Ishmaelite language (Arabic) younger individuals address elders in the plural. Similarly, Rabbi David Kimhi comments on the word אֲדֹנָי (Adonai) that in the Italian language, it is customary to address venerable persons in the plural.

However, this explanation is dismissed by some as merely a contrivance of Hebrew unfaithfulness. If this use were intended to confer greater honor on God, it would surely need to be consistently observed, since perpetual honor is due to Him; and yet, in Sacred Scripture, we frequently read that the holiest men addressed God in the singular using אֵל (El), אֱלֹהִים (Eloah), שַׁדַּי (Shaddai), יְהוָה (Yah), and other singular names. Moreover, if there were no mystery implied in this word but it was only used by Moses for the sake of honor, why did he not rather use the Tetragrammaton, which is considered much more honorable and hence ineffable by them?

Aben Ezra devised another interpretation, suggesting that God is referred to in the plural due to the plurality of powers or ideas that exist within His most simple divine nature. But I cannot agree with this, for it is an utterly irrational quibble. If God is signified by a plural name because of the plurality of virtues, then such virtues, as he describes, must either be something created or something uncreated. They cannot be something created, because then some created entity would have created the world, or would have cooperated with God in the creation of the world, which the Hebrews do not accept; they assert that only God created the world, and therefore they say that angels were created on the second day,

lest if they were said to have been created on the first day, they might be thought to have cooperated with God in the creation of the world. If they are something uncreated: they either proceed from God or they do not. If not: then there are multiple uncreated things entirely distinct: therefore, there would be multiple gods, which is most false. If they proceed from God, then we have what we intended.

Furthermore, no man is rightly called "men" due to the plurality of virtues, because saying "men" implies a plurality of subjects; thus, much less so God Himself; for just as identity is a cause for unity, so diversity is of plurality and multitude. If therefore a man cannot be said to be multiple men due to the plurality of virtues, even though his virtues are of a different nature from him: then neither can God, whose virtues are entirely the same as Him, since He is of the simplest nature; this is also conceded by the Hebrews.

Moreover, the Hebrews say that because God created the world with wisdom, goodness, and power, which are three divine properties, therefore it is said: אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) created. Yet this too is a contrivance; for just as an artisan operates through his skill, such as by a guiding rule, through the power to transform material, and by the love of the intended end, such as profit, if God is signified by a plural name because of wisdom, goodness, and power, this would be much more aptly said of a created artisan, because these attributes differ more in an artisan than in God, as in the artisan they are distinct in absolute terms: which cannot be in God.

Moreover, when Moses, seeing the people prone to idolatry and very inclined towards it, and instructing them about the unity of God, repeatedly cautioned them not to worship multiple gods, as we read in Deuteronomy: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one;" and again: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me," and in many other places; he would never have referred to

God in the plural unless there was a mystery of the plurality of divine Persons within God hidden in this name. For this name does not signify any kind of plurality, but specifically that of Persons, as is evident from all other places in Scripture when it refers to the true God.

Therefore, when Moses, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים (Elohim bara): "God created," we understand undoubtedly that the meaning of these words implies that the plurality of divine Persons is reflected in the word אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), and the unity of essence in the singular verb בָּרָא (created); and how the three divine Persons are not three gods, but one God; therefore, the Chaldean Interpreter translated it as ܝܐ (Yah); the Septuagint as θεός (Theos), and our Translator as Deus, all in the singular. This translation approach harmonizes the scriptural depiction of God's singular essence and the theological doctrine of the Trinity, where three Persons are understood as one God, not as multiple gods.

Further, we say that it is very fitting to speak this way. For action, as the Philosopher attests, belongs to subjects; in the divine, there are multiple subjects. However, the action of all divine Persons externally is one and indivisible. Thus, by אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) multiple subjects are indicated, and by the singular verb, a unique action is demonstrated. Hence, whenever in Sacred Scripture אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) signifies the true God and is joined with a verb, because the verb signifies action, the verb is usually placed in the singular number, lest the action and the power of the agents seem to be multiplied, which is absolutely one. Conversely, when it is joined with adjectives, the Scripture does not care to put the adjective in the plural number, since through it neither action nor power and therefore neither its substance nor essence is multiplied. Therefore, we concede there are three existing, three wise, three eternal, three creating; however, the case differs if a substantive noun is attached; we do not say three Gods or three creators, although Blessed

Athanasius in the Creed does not admit even the former; this, however, is wisely and for necessary caution, because of the false meaning that could be derived from it; namely, if these words were taken substantively, it might also seem to deny that the three divine Persons can be called Gods or Lords. Yet the Master of the Sentences and almost all theologians seem to admit this, and here by Moses the divine Persons are called Gods. Indeed, if this plural: Gods, signifies nothing other than having deity, and it is truly said of the Persons that they have deity, why then should it not also be said that they are Gods?

Indeed, if we more closely consider the words of Athanasius, we will see that he does not deny that the three divine Persons are Gods or Lords, but rather that there are three Gods or three Lords. Although we confess that there are three divine Persons and that they are Gods, we do not say that there are three Gods. This is a fallacy of moving from what is conceded separately to what is joined, which the Philosopher dismisses with the example: one is a musician and another is good, it is not permissible to infer: therefore, a good musician; goodness is indeed first predicated of a man as a man; afterward, not as a man about the same, but as a musician he is described. So it is in the case at hand. When I say of the Persons that they are Gods: I speak truly, since they have deity and it is true to say about them that they are three, as they are indeed three Persons. Yet it is not properly admitted: therefore, three Gods; because once it is separately conceded that there are three, this number pertains to the Persons; but if we were to concede jointly: there are three Gods: then the same number would pertain to the deity, and thus deity would be multiplied. However, it could be said: three Gods, if the term "Gods" remained appositive, in this sense: three, who are Gods.

Indeed, it could have been said: "The Gods created," just as it is said: "The Father and the Son are breathing," or "breathe," and just

as elsewhere it is also said: "Let us make man in our image and likeness"; and in other places too, the name אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) is joined with a plural verb, even though it signifies the true God. However, since that would truly have given occasion for error to those ignorant of the mystery, Moses most wisely and vigilantly provided for this on all sides by saying: בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים (Elohim bara): "God created," to express the plurality of Persons in the word אֱלֹהִים, and to preserve the unity of essence and action in the singular verb בָּרָא.

Indeed, if this mystery was to be indicated anywhere in Scripture, it was most fittingly in this very beginning, where the common work of the creation of all things is narrated, which was the work of the entire Trinity together. This initial passage, therefore, not only introduces the narrative of creation but also subtly embeds the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, linking the unified divine action with the plural nature of the divine Persons.

Heaven. In Hebrew: הַשָּׁמַיִם (Hashamayim). In Chaldean: שְׁמַיָּא (Shemaya). In Greek: Οὐρανός, as if ὀρανος, as Saint Ambrose says in the Hexaemeron, from ὁράω, meaning that it is transparent to sight and not at all dense, like water and earth.

The term is always in the plural in Hebrew, yet Latin translators sometimes render it as "coelum" in the singular, and other times as "coelos" in the plural. This distinction is interpreted by Rabbi Yosi, son of Chanina, and Rabbi Joseph as follows: אֵשׁ מִים, as if: שֵׁם מִים, meaning: there waters; while others interpret אֵשׁ מִים as: fire and water, as if the nature of heaven is somehow a median between fire and water.

Earth. In Hebrew: הָאָרֶץ (Ha'aretz). In Chaldean: אֶרְעָא (Ar'a). In Greek: Γῆ (Ge), from γῶ, that is, χωρῶ (chōrō), meaning "that which encompasses all": receptive of all things. In Latin, it is termed as if 'tetra', because it is obscure. According to some Hebrews, the word for earth, אֶרֶץ (aretz), comes from the root רוּץ (rutz), which means to

run, because over it runs and continually turns the sphere. However, it differs from תבל (tevel); for that word is a common name signifying both habitable and uninhabitable land, whereas ארץ specifically denotes habitable land.

As for what is meant by heaven and earth, there is not a unanimous opinion among all. Saint Basil, John Chrysostom, and Saint Ambrose in the Hexaemeron, along with many others, simply understand by "heaven" the corporeal creation, that is, the celestial body. Saint Augustine and Origen, on the other hand, understand it as the spiritual creation, namely the angels. Venerable Bede and Strabo interpret "heaven" here as the empyrean heaven, which was created at the very beginning and filled with angels created simultaneously. Thus, by the term "heaven," they understand both the corporeal nature, that is, the empyrean heaven, and the spiritual nature, that of the angels, to the extent that they assert that both heaven and angels were created at the same beginning.

The last interpretation particularly appeals to me. If, according to the first opinion, celestial bodies are understood here, referring to the firmament which is said to have been made on the second day, then it leaves the question: why is there no mention of spiritual creatures, namely angels, who are among the greatest and foremost of creations? Nor am I deceived by the many who say that Moses was speaking to a primitive people, who were not capable of understanding spiritual matters. For indeed, in many places of Sacred Scripture, and in this very book, angels are mentioned repeatedly; hence if there were absolutely no mention of their creation, they might have been believed to be uncreated.

However, if we agree with the second opinion that here by "heaven" angels should be understood, on the other hand, one might ask: why is there no mention of the most excellent body, the most worthy of all, when much lesser things are remembered? But if we take the

sense of the third interpretation, understanding here the empyrean heaven and angels as created together in it, everything becomes clear and every question that may arise is silenced. For thus neither are the foremost among creatures, namely those highest spiritual creatures and bodies, angels and that first heaven, which the Saints called ἐμπύριον (empyrean) in Greek, as if fiery, due to the prominence of the place and the brilliance of the light, left out in this enumeration of creatures; and this interpretation encompasses everything that is missing in the others. It contains the exposition of Saint Augustine, who remembered only the spiritual [creature]; it also includes that of Saint Basil, who posited only the corporeal; since this interpretation encompasses both the spiritual and the corporeal.

This opinion is also affirmed in the Fourth Lateran Council, held under Pope Innocent III, where the Holy Roman Church professes that God from the beginning created both the corporeal creation, that is, the worldly, and the spiritual, that is, the angelic, simultaneously from nothing at the beginning of time. The same is found in the Decretals in the section "De Summa Trinitate et Fide Catholica," chapter "Firmiter." The Hebrew Truth seems to support this view as well, which uses השמים in the dual number, as if there are two kinds of heavens, the spiritual and the corporeal.

Indeed, the term "heavens" not only refers to the corporeal expanse visible to the eye, which is the most common usage in Sacred Scripture, but also very clearly includes spiritual creatures, as seen in Deuteronomy: "Hear, O heavens, what I speak;" and in Isaiah: "Hear, O heavens, etc.," where it must be understood as referring to the celestial inhabitants. This joint creation of angels in the empyrean heaven along with it seems to be affirmed by Blessed Job when he says: "Where were you when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Those blessed spirits, the most eminent of that most excellent empyrean heaven,

are depicted as the brightest and most splendid stars, praising God in the morning, that is, at the beginning of their creation, as Saint Gregory the Great splendidly explains.

Moreover, Job's reference to Behemoth, that is, the devil, as the "beginning of the ways of God," suggests that while God was creating all things, He first created him, whom He made more eminent than the other angels, as the same Doctor explains. We also read in Isaiah: "How you have fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

Yet it does not escape me that many of the ancient Saints held the opinion that angels were created before this visible world. Indeed, this was the opinion of Gregory of Nazianzus, Saint Basil, Saint Jerome on the letter to Titus, and also Saint Ambrose in his Hexaemeron, among others from the ancients, all of whom believed that angels were made long before this visible world. John Cassian too, quoting the words of Abbess Sereni, states that no faithful doubt "before the creation of this visible creature, God made the spiritual and heavenly powers."

However, the Holy Roman Church at the great Council of Lateran determined that angels, along with the worldly creatures, were created at the beginning of time from nothing; yet I do not believe that the aforementioned Doctors thought that the angels were created before all bodily creation, but before this visible world; for at the beginning of time, when angels were created, this world was entirely invisible. And so it seems Saint Gregory understood it, who discussing that passage of Blessed Job: Where were you when the morning stars sang together? says thus: "Since the first nature created in time is believed to be that of rational spirits, angels are not inappropriately called the morning stars. If this is so, while the earth was still invisible and unformed, while darkness was over the deep, they anticipated the coming day of the subsequent era by existing in

the light of wisdom." Thus, we can say that angels were created both with the worldly creatures and before the visible world. Therefore, returning to the matter at hand, by 'heaven' here we must understand the angels with the empyrean heaven, or, which is the same, the empyrean heaven with the angels.

Indeed, since we claim that these were created at the beginning of time, that is, when time began, and since time could not have started without motion, as it is the measure of motion and of the motion of the first heavenly body: hence we say that, since the empyrean is entirely immovable, the primum mobile along with the crystalline heaven — which immediately began moving from east to west and with their motion time began — were created; and because these two bodies are perceived not by sense, but by reason, therefore they are counted with the empyrean, which is most remote from our senses and perceived only by reason.

And the earth. What exactly is meant by 'earth' is not agreed upon by everyone. Saint Basil, John Chrysostom, Saint Ambrose, Tertullian in *Adversus Hermogenem*, concerning matter: and from the Hebrews, Aben Ezra and many others want this term 'earth' in this context to signify that which we see with our eyes. However, this view is supported by the word itself, which is most frequently taken in this sense in Sacred Scripture, and they say here that Moses enumerates two principles of the universe: the highest and the lowest, within which the middle elements, from which the rest are generated, are proven to be contained, and therefore Moses does not mention their creation. But while asserting that heaven and earth were created by God in the beginning, he understands that the things that are in between were created with them. For although he said nothing about the creation of the waters, he says: And darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the waters.

Indeed, Saint Gregory Nazianzen in his Sermon on the Holy Spirit, Lactantius Firmianus in Book 2 of De Origine Erroris, Saint Augustine in Book 12 of the Confessions, Venerable Bede, as well as Hugh of Saint Victor, believe that by the term 'earth' here the first matter should be understood, from which thereafter all things contained within the empyrean heaven down to the center of the earth were made. This position is wonderfully supported by what follows:

Verse 2: But the earth was formless and void.

In Hebrew: וְהָאֶרֶץ קִיָּתָה תְּהִי וְבָהּ.

Which the Chaldean interpreter translated as:

וְהָאֶרֶץ נִשְׁתַּבְּשָׁה וְרִיקָנוּתָהּ, that is: And the earth was devastated or deformed and empty.

The Jerusalem Targum: וְהָאֶרֶץ תִּהְיֶה וְבָהּ, that is: Empty and void.

The Septuagint translated: Ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, that is: Invisible and unformed.

Aquila, the second interpreter after the Septuagint, translated: Κένωμα καὶ οὐδέν, that is emptiness and nothing; Symmachus, however: Ἀργόν καὶ ἀδιάκριτον, idle and undistinguished, as if a confusion of emptiness and privation; Theodotion also: Κενὸν καὶ οὐδέν, that is empty and nothing; finally, our interpreter: Formless and empty.

Indeed, all these descriptions wonderfully express the nature and conditions of the first matter. This also seems to be the opinion of the foremost scholars. Rabbi David, explaining in the Book of Roots what תְּהִי (tohu) and בָּהּ (bohu) mean, says they signify desolation and emptiness or vanity. He also brings in those wise in studying the natures of things to say that תְּהִי is a thing which has no likeness or form, yet is so arranged and prepared that, although it can receive

likeness and form, what the Greeks call ὕλη (hyle or matter); whereas תהו itself is form, that is, a thing that has the potential to endow itself with likeness and form, from which, by divine will combined, the creation of the world arose. This view is confirmed by Solomon speaking to God: Your hand . . . created the world from unseen matter or, as it is read in Greek and quoted by Saint Augustine, from unformed matter: ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης. Consider also what appears to refer here to what the most ancient philosophers said about chaos; see Lactantius Firmianus in Book 1 of *De Falsa Religione*, and 2 *De Origine Erroris*, from Hesiod the most ancient poet, Hermes Trismegistus the theologian of the pagans, Anaxagoras, Euripides, and many others later, whose opinion Ovid elegantly expressed:

"Before the sea and lands and, which covers all, the sky
There was one face of nature throughout the orb,
Which they called chaos: a raw and unsorted mass."

Lactantius also clarifies what the ancients understood by 'chaos', stating that Hesiod, in his book about the *Theogony*, that is, the *Generation of the Gods*, did not begin with a creating God, but with chaos, which is a confused mass of raw and unordered matter. Eusebius in *Preparation for the Gospel* also maintains that the matter from which all things were made was created from the beginning. I omit that this is the opinion of all scholastic theologians.

From this it is therefore clear that by the term 'earth' the first matter is to be understood, which is called empty, void, unformed, invisible, idle, undigested, and almost nothing; not that it is literally nothing, but because it occupies the lowest place in substances, and because it is not adorned by any form or appearance of its own; not that it lacks all activity. For it cannot in any way be understood that something that is an entity or substance, by its own act of being,

which they call entitative or of essence, could be deprived; but because such an act of this matter is very imperfect and potential towards any perfect acts, which belong to entities existing in themselves and to composites, therefore it is called deformed, void, and empty.

Yet we do not say that it was created entirely without any form, but, according to the opinion of Saint Augustine, we call it unformed because it did not possess a specific form that would draw it towards a determined existence, and it was devoid of any certain species; but it was overlaid by a certain form, confused and imperfect, which had the weakest and most imperfect act, by which it could be a common subject to all forms, and in which there was a desire to be overlaid by forms providing it with perfect existence. We do not deny that God, by His power, could have created the matter itself without any form at all, since matter naturally precedes all form and has its own act of being, which they call essence, which is not found to be really distinct from existence, and even if it were distinguished, it does not follow that matter could not exist without form. For if it has its own and unique essence, it will undoubtedly have existence, since existence is the act of essence itself. Therefore, God could, by His power, have produced and preserved matter without any form under such existence. Thus, we understand by the name 'earth' the matter itself, from which, by God as the author, all things are made.

As for the words: "But the earth was formless and void," those who understand this 'earth' as the one subject to our eyes interpret it as follows: it was formless, that is, invisible, since it was enveloped in darkness and covered by waters; and void, because it was not yet adorned with plants and herbs and enriched with minerals. Some Hebrews, like Rabbi Gaon, as Aben Ezra reports, "said that תהו is the same as תהום; but this is not correct, because the letter מ is a root, as in הדומ." Rabbi Solomon says that "תהו is: תמה ושממון, wonder and desolation; whereas בהו is: רקות וצדו, thin and desolate." However,

Aben Ezra explains תהו, according to the Targum, as "because there was nothing in it."

"And darkness was over the face of the deep."

In Hebrew: וַחֲשֹׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם.

In Chaldean: וַחֲשֹׁכָא עַל־אַפִּי תְהוֹמָא, that is, "Darkness was over the face of the abyss."

The Septuagint translated it as: Καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, that is, "And darkness was upon the abyss," omitting 'face,' as does our own translator as well. It is the manner of the Hebrew language to most often add 'face' with the adverbs 'against' and 'over,' as in the following verse: And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters: in Hebrew: Over the face of the waters; and so also: Over the face of the firmament; Against the face of the desert; Over the face of the earth, and: Against the face of the earth.

We must see what should be understood by the terms darkness and abyss. Saint Basil and Ambrose interpret darkness here as the shadow of a body, since every body creates a shadow, which shades either adjacent or lower things. Therefore, these darknesses surrounding the world arose due to the shadow of the heavenly body, so that such darknesses did not exist as a substance, but as a certain condition that occurs to air from the deprivation of light. They also believe that angels were created before the establishment of this world, and undoubtedly existed in light, for which the heavenly body by its shadow produced darkness. Thus, Saint Basil specifies three factors that converge to create a shadow, namely: light, a body that obstructs light, and a place devoid of light. Saint Augustine and Bede, however, understand darkness simply as the absence of light, because light had not yet been made, so that darkness is nothing but the absence of light. This term also takes darkness to be just that: absence of light, as silence is nothing but the absence of sound,

silence is said where there is no sound; and nudity is not something, but in a body where there is no covering, nudity is said; and emptiness is not something, but where there is no body, emptiness is said. And this opinion is more probable.

Rabbi Solomon considers that by 'abyss' the very waters themselves, which were upon the earth, should be understood. Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostom, and Ambrose think of it as a vast multitude and depth of waters extending immeasurably, whose bottom cannot be easily reached. Rabbi David holds the same view in the Book of Roots; and in this sense, the term 'abyss' is very frequently used in Sacred Scripture. Therefore, according to them, darkness was over the face of the abyss, because whatever was the abyss was covered by the waters veiling the face of the earth in darkness.

Saint Augustine, however, understands by the abyss here the same prime matter from which, since it was created out of nothing, all things were made, and asserts that it is designated by various names. He says it is called 'heaven and earth' insofar as these were made from it; it is called 'invisible and unformed earth,' because among the elements of the world, earth appears less beautiful than the others; it is called 'invisible' due to its obscurity, 'unformed' due to its deformity and formlessness. It is called the 'water' over which the Spirit of God was hovering, just as the will of the craftsman hovers over things being made, because all things that grow on earth, whether animals or plants and the like, begin to be formed and nourished from moisture; and because it was easy and malleable, lying beneath the workman, so that all things could be formed from it. Finally, it is called the 'dark abyss' because of confusion, as it was formless and could not be seen or handled in any distinct form. These, then, are all names for this matter, used so that the unknown might be insinuated to the unlearned with familiar words, and not with one word, but with many, lest if there were one, it might be

thought to be what men have preserved in understanding that word. This is Saint Augustine's view.

"And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

In Hebrew: וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם.

In Chaldean: וְרוּחָא מִן-קֳדָם יְיָ מְנַשְׁפָּא עַל-אַפֵּי מַיָּא, that is, "The Spirit from before God blew over the waters, or over the face of the waters."

In Greek: Καὶ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος, that is, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

This passage is likewise interpreted in various ways. Some understand by 'spirit' here to mean 'air,' saying that Moses here enumerates the parts of the entire world; for רוּחַ in Hebrew can mean air, wind, spirit, and will. Theodoret consistently affirms that it should be understood as referring to the wind, as in the phrase: "Your wind will blow and the waters will flow." The same is understood by Aben Ezra, who says that the 'Spirit of God' is mentioned in governance, "because it was sent by the will of God to dry up the waters." This interpretation is supported by the Chaldean Targum, which translates the word מְרַחֶפֶת as מְנַשְׁפָּא, meaning 'was blowing', which is characteristic of wind.

Saint John Chrysostom offers such an exposition, stating that there was an effective and vital operation in the waters, and that they were not simply still and motionless. Therefore, because that water had a sort of vital force, he says: "And the Spirit of the Lord was hovering, etc." Saint Augustine understands it as the divine will, which hovered over the waters, that is, the prime matter, as the will of the craftsman hovers over the objects being made. However, Saint Basil, Jerome, Ambrose, and Diodorus firmly believe that it should be said of the Holy Spirit. For the word מְרַחֶפֶת, Saint Jerome says, "we might call it brooded, or warmed, in the likeness of a bird warming

its eggs with the heat of life." From this, we understand it not to be about the spirit of the world, but about the Holy Spirit, who is also said to be the giver of life from the beginning. Diodorus says similarly: "Just as a bird warms its eggs with its wings to animate them, so the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters to make them fertile." Saint Basil mentions the same thing as related to him by a Syrian, and Ambrose in his Hexaemeron also brings in the Syrian language. Rabbi Solomon seems to entirely agree; he says that "the throne of glory remained in the air and brooded over the face of the waters by the spirit of the Lord's mouth and his word, as a dove broods over its nest." In Bereshit Rabba, the Hebrews have that this spirit is the Spirit of the Messiah, which we also say is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Christ, according to Saint Paul. The Hebrew word, although sometimes it means to brood, as in Deuteronomy 32: "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young," where the word רוּחַ is used, more often signifies motion and agitation, as the interpreter of words, Rabbi David, says in the Book of Roots.

Here, however, it is permissible to note first: how the entire Trinity cooperated in the creation of the universal world. For in the name of God, we understand the Father, who is the principle, source, and origin of all divinity and deity; in the name of the Beginning, the Son Himself, who says of Himself: "I am the Beginning, who also speak to you"; and in the name of the Spirit of God, the third Person in the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit, from whom it is written: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the Spirit of His mouth all their power."

Secondly: it is permissible to observe that the Holy Spirit here is called רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, that is, the Spirit of Gods; for אֱלֹהִים is plural, as has already been proved, through which the Father and the Son are understood. For the Father alone is not multiple persons, but one person only; similarly, the Son; however, the Father and the Son are

multiple persons; hence they can be called Gods, since there are multiple persons possessing deity, as we have already declared. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Gods, it is declared that He proceeds from the Father and the Son, since there is no other relationship of origin in the divine; otherwise, it cannot rightly be called the Spirit of Gods if He does not proceed from both the Father and the Son. Nor should anyone wonder how the Holy Spirit can be called the Spirit of Gods, since, although He proceeds from both the Father and the Son, it is only as from one principle, insofar as the Father and Son are one principle of spiration in the fecundity of the will. We fully admit this; yet, we still say it is not incongruous to call Him the Spirit of Gods: for the Father and Son, although they are one spirative principle of the Holy Spirit in the fecundity of will and indeed one spirator, are nevertheless two spirating persons; for both the Father and the Son can fittingly be called spirating Persons.

Verse 3: "And God said: Let there be light. And there was light."

In Hebrew: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי-אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר

In Chaldean: וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ יְהִי-נְהוֹרָא וְנְהוֹרָא נְהוֹרָא, that is, "God said: Let there be light. And there was light."

The Septuagint, however, translated it as: Γενηθήτω φῶς, "Let there be light"; for the Hebrew word אוֹר signifies both light and luminary.

We must now consider what is meant by the name of light. Some think that the sun itself should be understood here as the light, because Saint Dionysius seems to assert this. However, this opinion is clearly contradicted by Sacred Scripture, which states that the sun was created on the fourth day. The Church also confesses this, saying:

"On the fourth day, establishing the flaming
Wheel of the sun."

But they say that the sun is not mentioned there as made, but by recalling what was found to have been made on that fourth day. Yet even this is not satisfactory. For just as it is said here: "Let there be light," so it is said there: "Let there be lights," and it is the opinion of all the Doctors—Basil, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and all the scholastics—that the sun was created on the fourth day: here, however, it is not the sun but the very brilliance of light, by which all things would be illuminated, that was brought forth.

Although we hear of light being brought forth here, we should not think of it as a substance, as some have supposed; for it is neither a spiritual substance nor a bodily one, nor is it the substantial form of any body. If it were a spiritual substance, it would be entirely invisible to bodily eyes; yet light and brightness are seen; nor do spiritual substances decay, as we see light itself decay.

Nor is it a bodily substance; for it is not possible for two bodies to occupy the exact same space, as light occupies in a transparent medium; moreover, it is neither an incorruptible body, since it visibly decays; nor is it corruptible, since from its corruption nothing is generated that would indicate it was a corporeal entity.

Finally, it is neither the substantial form of any body; such a form is not perceived by sight, nor is it substance in this instance, but rather an accident. Yet light is both perceived by sight and is clearly an accident, as evident in the moon, especially during an eclipse, when the moon is deprived of light, yet remains the moon. Furthermore, such a form would constitute a body, and then there would be two bodies simultaneously, as is seen in the arrangement of rays. Thus, by light, we understand a certain quality inherent in a luminous body, by which it illuminates.

It should not be thought that light and brightness differ in kind, but rather in subject, similar to heat in fire and heat produced in the environment. In fire, heat exists as in its cause and permanently,

since it is intrinsic to fire; in the environment, however, it exists as an effect and does not persist. Similarly, light in its proper subject is called 'lux', which opticians term primary light; in the environment, however, it is called 'lumen' and opticians refer to it as secondary light. Similarly, 'ray' and 'brightness' signify the same thing; but a ray is the same light proceeding directly from a luminous body; brightness, however, is as it is reflected from some body.

From this, it is permissible to note that light is not some intentional quality and a specific form of light, as some say, but must be described as a real quality, since light and brightness do not differ in kind, yet there is a distinction between a kind and that of which it is a kind. For the forms of objects are not sensible, but they are that by which an object is sensed; however, light is seen in itself, and does not require another kind to be seen, if it were a kind: but indeed, it needs such, as when it is in the solar medium, but the eye is in darkness. Furthermore, because light itself causes effects and brings about change; it heats and produces substance, which the forms themselves cannot do.

Moreover: kinds themselves are of composites, of forms; it is not the color, but the colored thing that has a kind; thus, if light were a kind, it would not be a kind of light, which is a form, but of the luminous, it would be a kind and of the luminous, and then by any light refracted and reflected the sun would be seen as in a mirror, which does not happen. Therefore, light is a certain quality of a luminous body, by which it illuminates and produces brightness in the medium.

Here we encounter a perspective where light is sometimes considered to be synonymous with the luminous body itself, as Saint Augustine remarks: "Light holds the first place among bodies." Thus, by the common consent of all theologians, light in this context is understood to have been created not as a quality distinct from the

luminous body itself, but as existing within it and was like a luminous cloud not made from nothing, but from pre-existing material, so that it might be light and have the power to illuminate. This light is considered not of an elemental nature, but celestial, a very thin and subtle body, in agreement with Saint Dionysius, who deems light to be solar: not just any light, but specifically solar light; for the sun is one thing, and solar light another, as Saint Basil astutely notes, when speaking about the sun, responding to the question: if the origin of light preceded the sun, why is the sun now said to rise to shine upon the earth? He considers brilliance and illumination not simply as a quality in itself, but as the most subtle shining and illuminating substance, as revealed in the ultimate subject. Basil indeed equates light with brilliance and illumination. These ideas do not contradict those previously stated about light; for then the very nature of light was produced, whereas now the body of the sun has been formed to serve as a vehicle for that primordial light. For just as fire and a lamp are different and not the same—fire indeed has the power to illuminate, whereas a lamp is made to provide moderate light to those in need—so too are these pure, clear, and immaterial lights now constructed as vehicles, the luminaries. This he says.

From the opinion of such a distinguished individual, it is clear that solar light and light itself are distinct. We can verify this based on the effects of the moon, as he says. For when the moon wanes or undergoes an eclipse, it is not consumed entirely; rather, it sheds and then regains the light it had received, presenting to us the appearance of waxing and waning; however, the body of the moon is not consumed during an eclipse, which is clearly evidenced by what we observe. And a bit further on, he states that the body of the moon is one thing, and the light it emits, by which it shines, is another; this is clearer during a lunar eclipse, where the moon, deprived entirely of the light it receives from the sun, still remains the moon: "Think

something similar about the sun, except that it never sheds the light it has once received and adapted to itself," etc. And by this reasoning, we believe Saint Dionysius said that light was created on the first day, meaning solar light, which was unshaped because it was not yet adapted to and arranged for a solar body, and as though it had not yet found a most suitable vehicle for itself.

This is also the opinion of John of Damascus, who says: "To those luminaries, the Creator first imparted clear light, not because He was incapable of giving them another light, but so that they would not remain devoid of it, for the luminary is not the light itself, but the receptacle of light." Indeed, this seems to be the position of Sacred Scripture itself; concerning the sun, we read in Ecclesiasticus: "A marvelous vessel, the work of the Most High." Therefore, by 'light' here, we do not mean the sun, nor even a quality distinct in itself from the luminous body, since light is a quality of the luminous; rather, we refer to some luminous substance, celestial by nature, made from pre-existing material, which had the power to illuminate and with its brightness to light up and refine everything, which is called light, just as we call the luminous substance of a lamp 'lamp light'. It is also said: solar light, just as: lamp light.

The way in which this light made day by its brilliance and caused night by its absence is not universally agreed upon. Saint Basil says that "with that primordial light spreading its brilliance, day occurred; and by it retracting itself, night occurred, all according to the command of divine will and the measure defined by God." The same was understood by Gregory of Nyssa and John of Damascus. We read of a similar occurrence when Moses stretched out his hands towards heaven, and there were horrific darknesses over all the land of Egypt for three days, although the sun was still active in our hemisphere, spreading its brilliance over the land of Goshen and emitting rays of its light to other regions. Something similar might have also happened during the Passion of the Lord, when the sun

was obscured and darkness fell over all the earth, an event not caused by nature, but by divine command.

However, this view does not please Saint Augustine, because he sees no reason for this alternation of emitting and contracting rays of light, since there were no humans or animals then whose needs this would serve. Furthermore, it is not in the nature of light to retract itself and its light unless by miracle; but in the first institution of nature, what is sought is not a miracle, but the nature of things. Therefore, we agree with Saint Augustine that this light caused day and night by its own motion. For when that luminous substance, which we understand here as light, was of celestial nature, it certainly obtained the motion by which the *primum mobile*, created from the beginning, began to move from east to west, a motion which indeed causes day and night, as well as evening and morning and midday. Through such a motion, then, that light made day by its presence and night by its absence, as the air was deprived of its light; it further made evening, morning, and midday, just as the sun now does; except that now the day is illuminated by simple light, with the sun acting in our hemisphere, unlike then with that light.

Verse 4: "And God saw the light that it was good."

In Hebrew: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב.

In Chaldean: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב, which translates as "And God saw the light that it was good."

The Hebrew word טוֹב signifies good, beautiful, fitting, delightful; hence, the Chaldean interpreter sometimes translates it as שפיר and שפירא, which mean beautiful and beauty. All these attributes wonderfully suit the nature of light. Light is good, not only because of its brilliance but also because of its overall utility and the benefits it provides; it contributes to many aspects of life. It is delightful, as it pleases by sight, serves those who see it, and immediately upon

being seen, it frees us from sorrow and soothes the mind with a gentle tranquility. It is beautiful, as it adorns the world itself by spreading its light and enhancing the appearance of things. Finally, it is lovely, for its distinguished brilliance places all visual grace in its light, and the splendor of its light, infused into translucent bodies, makes them clearly visible and renders all the hues and beauty of colors visible to our eyes, which previously, veiled by darkness, were invisible.

And He separated the light from the darkness.

In Hebrew: וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ.

In Chaldean: וְאַפְרִישׁ יְיָ בֵּין נְהוֹרָא וּבֵין חֹשׁוֹכָא: And God separated the light from the darkness.

St. Basil explains it thus: He divided, that is, He made their nature unmingled, so that neither of these would mix with the other, but they would be contrary and opposed to each other. St. Ambrose agrees with this; and indeed, there is no agreement between light and darkness.

But this distinction also implies something more. For God distinguished the light from the darkness, not only because He made them of unmingled nature, but also, as John Chrysostom says, “because He assigned to each a proper place and defined a fitting time, so that in turn, in one hemisphere light prevailed, and darkness was driven into the other, and light ruled over the day, while night was enveloped by darkness; and for this reason, because in the now created luminous substance He established the cause and power of shining, and in the earth’s opacity He placed the cause of darkness.”

Verse 5: And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.

In Hebrew: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לָאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ לַיְלָה.

In Chaldean: וְקָרָא יְיָ לְנֹהַר יוֹמָא וְלַחֹשֶׁכָּא לַיְלָא:

And God called the light Day and called the darkness Night.

While light emits its rays of light over our hemisphere and illuminates it clearly and translucently, it is day, and here light seems to be understood as the entire period during which it shines over the hemisphere; but when light departs from here, darkness occurs, which is the absence of light. As long as light is absent, it is darkness and this entire period of darkness is called night.

And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

In Hebrew: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד.

In Chaldean: וַיְהִי-רֵמֶשׁ וַיְהִי-צֶפֶר יוֹמָא הָד: And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

The Hebrew word יום (day) sometimes signifies the time when the sunlight is upon the earth, as previously said: "He called the light day," and this is whenever יום is paired with לילה (night), as in "day and night," mentioned later. However, it sometimes encompasses both day and night together, referring to the natural day contained within a twenty-four-hour period during which the sun completes its circuit by the movement of the first mobile. This is the understanding when it is said: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." Moses does not encompass both day and night under the terms "day" and "night," but by a more established custom attributes the whole with the term "day." "Just as the generation of men is counted and understood to include women, because the latter are connected to the more significant (men), so too are the days counted and the nights considered as joined." And this custom can be found observed throughout Scripture, as in "the days of our years," and "the days of my life... short and evil," and elsewhere frequently.

Furthermore, evening, which is the time after sunset known as twilight, is called ערב, which in Hebrew signifies a kind of mixing, because at that time there is a sort of confusion of shapes, so that one thing can hardly be distinguished from another, as in clear light. Morning, however, is בקר, derived from בָּקַר, which means a kind of searching, because with the day now brightening, everything is examined; although sometimes it is used for light, as we read in the Book of Job: בָּקַר stars of light; just as ערב sometimes signifies darkness.

Therefore, the Hebrews interpret this place as follows: by evening they understand night, namely the entire period of darkness from the beginning of twilight until dawn; by morning, however, they mean day, that is, the entire remaining time until evening: and thus, through the night and day, the whole natural day is consumed. They further say that the natural day begins with the start of the first night and ends at the beginning of the following night; this they confirm by the fact that darkness seems to precede light here, since darkness first, which is called night by God, was upon the face of the deep: soon after, light followed, as God said: "Let there be light." Moreover, it is read in Leviticus: "From evening unto evening shall you celebrate your sabbaths."

However, our scholars have a different understanding. By evening they mean the end of the daytime, and by morning the end of the nighttime; therefore, evening happened first and then morning, because the first day had an evening but no morning; morning is said to be the end of the preceding day and the beginning of the following, which is dawn, having neither full light nor complete darkness. Since no day had preceded that would end with the beginning of the following day, thus the first day had no morning, especially because with the appearance of light, immediately a full and bright day arose over the earth, which did not begin with dawn, but with clear light and was completed in the morning of the

following day. Therefore, with the setting of the light and gradually, after a span of daytime length, sinking below the horizon, evening occurred, as now happens in the usual course of the sun; and morning occurred again with its return over the earth starting another day, and thus one day of twenty-four hours was completed.

Venerable Bede and St. Ambrose explain it more explicitly in their writings on the Hexaemeron; similarly, St. John Chrysostom explains, saying: "He notably named the end of the day and the end of the night as one, to establish a certain order and sequence of visible things and that there be no confusion." St. Basil agrees with this in his Hexaemeron, explaining the same concept. It is not surprising that by the term evening the day is understood, and by morning, the night; for any thing is more aptly named from its end and termination rather than from its beginning. Therefore, since evening is the end of the daytime and morning is the end of the nighttime, it was possible to call this morning that evening.

I know others from more recent times interpret it differently. Some, understanding the term evening as night, assert that Moses prioritized night over day because the sun was created in the other hemisphere, so that in the hemisphere of the people to whom he was writing, night arose first then day, so that while light occupied the day in that one, darkness would dominate this one. Others contend that from the beginning of creation to the creation of light, twelve hours had passed, which here are understood under the name of evening, and therefore evening is placed before day because in those twelve hours darkness preceded light. However, such positions are not supported by reason or authority.

But why did he not say "the first day" but "one day," where it would seem more appropriate to call the day that preceded all others "the first day" according to the order presented, rather than "one"? Rabbi Solomon responds that it is written this way, "because God was

alone in His age, since the angels were created on the second day, as explained in Bereshit Rabba." But this is beside the point.

St. Basil and Ambrose assign another reason, both in the literal and in a deeper sense. First, he said "one" to define the span of day and night and to unite the time of both, namely day and night, so that the twenty-four-hour period of one day was completed, and thus night would also be understood under the term day: as if even in the solstices one exceeds the other, a set period would still describe the total span of both combined, as if he were saying: "The span of twenty-four hours is one day." Also, because the heavens complete a circuit from the same point back to it in one day, so that each time according to the circuit of the sun, evening and morning occupy the world, it does not prolong the time, but completes its period within the span of one day. The second reason is more profound and is taught in the hidden and secret writings. Indeed, God, who created the nature of time, assigned to it measures and signs, namely marking the days and measuring the week in a circle, commanded the week to turn within itself, counting the cycles of time and its motions, and one day to complete the week by returning to itself seven times; this representation of the universe begins from itself and ends in itself, which is now known to turn back upon itself in its own era and is by no means terminated. Therefore, he called the beginning of time not "the first day," but "one day," so that from the term itself it might also obtain a connection to the fate of future ages. For He, who carries the form of a unique and unchangeable principle before Himself, is properly and appropriately called "one"... Therefore, to raise our minds to that future life, which is called "one day," according to the saying: "For the day of the Lord is great and very splendid," and to guide us toward that future state, Moses called it "one day," which is the image of that age, the first of days, coeval with light, namely the holy Lord's Day, which the resurrection of the Lord specially honored. These are the dual

reasons of these Doctors. John Chrysostom also assigns the first reason.

However, it seems to me that this should be said according to the Hebrew phraseology; for in Hebrew, 'one' often indicates order; thus 'one' frequently means 'first' in that language, a manner of speaking which is also found in the Gospels, whose phrasing is almost entirely Hebrew; for example, 'one of the sabbath', as Theophylact explains and many others, means 'the first of the sabbath', that is, the first week, and 'one month' means the first day of the month.

From these points, there arises no small difficulty regarding what is said about God: what it means for God to speak; for He says, "And God said: Let there be light"; then, what it means for God to see that the light was good; thirdly, what it means for God to call the light day and the darkness night.

Regarding the first point, St. Basil says: "In God, when we assert voice, word, and commandment, be careful not to understand or imagine the noise produced by vocal organs; nor the air articulated and impressed by the function of the tongue; but rather consider it the moment or inclination of the divine will figured in the form of a commandment, by which the things taught may melt as if before the eyes and be made more expressly manifest." St. Ambrose feels exactly the same. For he says: "The full voice of light does not signify a disposition of apparatus, but shines forth with the effect of action. The Creator of nature spoke light and created it. The word of God is His will, the work of God is His nature." And shortly thereafter: "And God said, not as if some sound of speech were to exit through vocal organs, nor as if the motion of the tongue would form celestial speech and strike the air with some noise of words: but that His will would bring forth the knowledge of its action by the effect of the operation."

The same opinion was held by Rabbi Gaon, who, as Aben Ezra reports, explains: "ויאמר כמו וירצה," that is, "And He said, is as if He willed and it was, thus it was that the light itself came into being for seeing according to His command, according to that: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, or created, for He commanded, and they were created'; and the pronoun is upon the work that was not, and it is by way of a parable of a king and his servant; and this light was to adorn the air." Thus, this scholar understands God saying let there be light as nothing other than bringing it into existence according to the command of His will. In the Hebrew language, to say sometimes denotes an internal conception and will of the mind. For in Exodus, where we read, "Do you mean to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" it is read in Hebrew: "Do you mean to kill me?" אָמַר אֶתָּה, where our Translation conveyed the sense, for wanting is placed for saying.

St. Augustine, however, explains this passage as pertaining to the nature of the Word, "about which it is said: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. Since it is said about Him: All things were made through Him, it is sufficiently shown that light was made through Him, when God said: 'Let there be light.' If so, what God said, 'Let there be light,' is eternal because the Word of God is God with God, the only Son of God, coeternal with the Father, although through God speaking in the eternal Word, a temporal creature was made." Therefore, God said, not temporally, not by a sound of voice, but in the Word coeternal with Him, that is, the Word was begotten intertemporally, in which it was and was arranged from eternity, to be made in time and in it, it was made. When we hear: And God said: Let it be, we understand it to be in the Word that it should be made; but when it adds: And it was so, we understand that the created being did not exceed in the Word the bounds of its kind. This is St. Augustine's opinion. To make what is said clearer and more distinctly

understood, it will not be amiss to bring forth some things according to the opinion of scholastic theologians.

Among theologians and Holy Doctors, the act of speaking is understood in three ways. Sometimes it is understood essentially, and thus it is the same as to understand or to declare, in which manner St. Anselm in the Monologion says: "To speak for the supreme Spirit is nothing other than to contemplate in thought"; and again: each one in the Trinity speaks, for every Divine Person understands itself formally and thus formally declares itself. Similarly, each Divine Person speaks all intelligibles, because it understands everything through itself and its intelligence.

Secondly, speaking is understood in a purely notional or personal way, and thus it is nothing other than to generate the Word, and this belongs only to the Father, who begets the Word and only the Word speaks in this way, as it is akin to producing through the intellect, which befits only the Father.

Thirdly, speaking is commonly taken neither purely essentially nor purely personally, but it includes both and is the knowledge produced by oneself to declare everything declarable; as St. Augustine says: "Therefore, as if declaring Himself, the Father begot the Son, equal to Him in all things; for He would not have fully and perfectly declared Himself if there was anything less or more in His Word than in Himself. The Father in the Word, which He begot, declares both Himself and all things that are in Him." Thus, in this way only the Father speaks, but not only the Word, but also everything that He declares through the Word begotten from Himself; and thus to speak involves two acts, namely to beget and to declare, one of which terminates solely at the person of the Word, the other at everything declarable that shines forth in the Word. And in this way, as St. Anselm says, "when the supreme Spirit declares

Himself, He declares all things that were made"; for all things that were made were in the Word and shone forth.

It should not be understood that the Father operates only through the Son; for, as St. Augustine says concerning the passage: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made firm, and by the spirit of His mouth all their power," the Father works through His Word and the Holy Spirit, and the actions of the divine Persons are indivisible and common to all when acting externally. Although the Father works together with the Son and the Holy Spirit and does nothing without them, still, because it is not the Father from the Son but the Son from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from both, that they have the power to operate, therefore, it is said that the Father operates through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Also, because God operates as a craftsman, as He is called the craftsman of all in Wisdom: a craftsman operates both through intellect and will, for he both wills and understands; thus, God is said to operate through the Son, to whom intellect is appropriated, as He proceeds from the Father in the manner of intellect, and through the Holy Spirit, because He proceeds from the Father and the Son in the manner of will.

However, the action itself is common to all three, and unique to none: and here speaking is not taken purely personally, but implies a certain divine intellection according to practice, with the divine will leading and commanding; and this speaking of God is properly doing, according to the eternal disposition of things in the Word and the command of the divine will.

For by this very fact established, that the first Person by understanding Himself speaks, and by speaking generates the Son, and by loving Himself and the Son, breathes out the Holy Spirit; He also sees in Himself and in His Word, through which He expresses His entirety, the ideas of all natures, which natures He also sees as creatable, so that they might exist in some way outside of Himself. Thus, understanding them in this way and pre-knowing them in His

coeternal Word, and with His best and eternal will in that Holy Spirit full of goodness and grace, it pleased Him that they should be thus, that is, to come forth into their being from Him, not by nature producing them or out of the necessity of nature, but from good pleasure and mere will. Thus willing, He authoritatively said: "Let there be," that is, He commanded them to be, ineffably bringing them forth by this His word.

Having somewhat explained the first part, we must proceed to the second, namely what it means for God to see that the light was good. St. Ambrose explains it thus: "And God saw etc.; not that He saw something He did not know, nor did He approve what He was unaware of beforehand or had not seen, but it is characteristic of good works that they do not need an external commendation, but testify to their own merit when seen." And shortly after: "Therefore, with His own words, He expressed the nature of light, which pleases by being seen, since it itself provides the faculty of seeing. Therefore, God saw the light and illuminated it with His countenance and saw that it is good, not from the part of God, but from a general judgment."

St. John Chrysostom says that Moses spoke in human terms; he states: "Did He not know that light was good before it was made, but after it was produced, did its appearance show the craftsman its beauty and goodness? And who with a heart would say such a thing? For if a man, who crafts something through art, knows the use of what he intends to make before he fabricates and forms it, how much more the craftsman of all, who brought everything into being by His word, knew before making light that it would be good. Why, then, did he use this expression? He humbles Himself and speaks all these things according to human custom, that blessed Prophet. And just as men, when they have labored over something with great diligence, and finally set an end to their labors, then at last they approve what they have done, and thus praise their work: so also

does divine Scripture usually speak, and now, when it has lowered itself to the weakness of our ears, and said: And God saw, etc."

St. Augustine, in "Genesis against the Manicheans," holds the same view, stating that "God was pleased with His work as an artisan, and these words do not suggest that an unknown good was revealed to God, but that the finished product was pleasing." In his book "The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Unfinished," he also states: "And God saw the light, etc. This phrase should be understood not as an expression of unexpected favor, but as an approval of the work. For what can be more fittingly said about God, as far as human expression allows, than when it is stated: He said, it was made, He was pleased? So that in what He said, His command is understood; in what was made, His power; in what pleased Him, His benevolence; as things ineffable had to be spoken by man to men in such a way that they might be useful to all."

Some also interpret it as: He saw, that is, He made it be seen, making us recognize the goodness of light through its most evident effects; it is clear that it contributes to many things, if not to say all physical things. A similar mode of expression is found in several places in the Sacred Scripture, such as: "Now I know that you fear God," meaning I have made it known, etc. Rabbi Aben Ezra explains this seeing as being in thought or estimation, that is, that God deemed the light He made to be good; and it is the same sentiment.

Therefore, the sense of this expression here is: He saw, etc.: God knew and understood in the benevolence of His Spirit, not as if unknown before and known after the light was made, that it pleased Him, but that it pleased Him with the same benevolence that it should remain made, with which it pleased Him that it should be made: for being made, it did not exceed or diminish the bounds set in the Word for its kind; but it was made exactly as God had already arranged in His Word that He would make it. This, then, is what is

meant by: And God saw the light that it was good. This is also how it is to be understood whenever it is subsequently said that God saw, etc.

Having elucidated the first and second parts according to our capacity, the third part now presents itself for further explanation, namely, what it means for God to call the light day, etc. St. John Chrysostom says that after the distinction between light and darkness, God gave them the names by which they would be called. St. Ambrose, however, believes this also pertains to distinction, that even by the name itself he might distinguish day from night, as they are distinguished by nature and cause.

St. Augustine in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* offers this explanation of the passage, saying "all this was said for our understanding. In what language did God call the light day and the darkness night? Was it Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or some other? But with God, there is pure understanding, without noise and diversity of languages. But he called, it is said he made it be called, because thus he distinguished everything and ordered it so that they could be discerned and receive names."

In his unique book *De Genesi ad Litteram Imperfecto*, he first cautions that by light and darkness, the names themselves should not be taken, since these, "as articulated by the voice to signify things, are names"; because when God said: Let there be light, etc.: He divided between the light and the darkness, "it was not yet about the names"; but it should be understood that "a thing, which has received a name, could not be expressed otherwise than by some name." He then offers another explanation, that this calling should be understood as the distinction itself; not all light is day and all darkness night: but light and darkness, ordered and distinguished at certain intervals from each other, are called by the names of day and night. He still introduces another idea, proceeding by inquiry, that

these names "mean to signify to us what light he spoke of and what darkness, as if he said: God made the light, and divided between the light and the darkness; and by light, I mean day and by darkness, I mean night, lest you understand any other light which is not day, and lest you understand any other darkness which is not night."

In the first book of *De Genesi ad Litteram*, Augustine delves deeper into why God called the light day and the darkness night: "Because with His coeternal Word, that is, through the internal and eternal reasons of unchangeable wisdom, not with a bodily sound of voice, God called the light day and the darkness night." And let this suffice for the elucidation of this phrase. Let us now proceed to the work of the second day.

Verse 6: And God said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters.

In Hebrew: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם.

In Chaldean: וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ יְהִי רָקְעָא בְּמַצְיְעוֹת מַיָּא: And God said: Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.

And let it separate the waters from the waters.

In Hebrew: וַיְהִי מְבָדִיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם.

In Chaldean: וַיְהִי מְפָרִישׁ בֵּין מַיָּא לַמַּיָּא. And let it be dividing between the waters and the waters.

The Hebrew term רָקִיעַ (*rakia*) translated by the Septuagint as στερέωμα and by our translator as 'firmament', in Hebrew conveys the idea of an expanse or stretching out, derived from the verb רָקַע, which means to stretch or spread out. This concept can also be seen in the physical action described in Exodus where the same root word is used in the context of hammering out gold into thin sheets: וַיִּרְקְעוּ אֶת־פָּתֵי הַזָּהָב: "And they hammered out sheets of gold." Therefore, the

sky is called רָקִיעַ because it is an expanse stretched out above the earth.

Looking to the reasons why רָקִיעַ is called 'firmament' in translation, it's because the celestial body is solid and firm, as indicated in the Book of Job: "Were you with Him when He established the heavens, which are as solid as a molten mirror?" Hence, possibly, the Septuagint translators, considering the firm and solid nature of the celestial body, called what the Hebrews named רָקִיעַ, στερέωμα, from the verb στερεόω, which means to make firm, and the Latin translator followed this rendering by translating it as 'firmamentum'.

As for what is meant by 'firmament,' opinions vary. Some understand by 'firmament' that part of the air in which clouds gather, thinking that the term 'firmament' might refer to some kind of solidification happening at that time. This interpretation faces challenges, notably the scriptural statement that the great lights and stars were set in the firmament of heaven, which clearly are not in the atmospheric layer. This interpretation is also rejected by St. Basil in his Hexameron. Others, noting that Scripture explicitly states the creation and establishment of the heavens by God, suggest that here Moses continues the narrative of creation, where the summary of the divine operation initially compactly covers the entirety, and here the details of the operation are elaborated through the various interacting elements. Just as a craftsman might be said to build a house by first laying the foundations, then raising the walls, and finally adding the roof; so Moses first provides a summary of the entire divine operation and creation, saying, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth," encapsulating the existence of all from the two extremes, employing a kind of prolepsis; a method frequently used in Sacred Scripture where 'heaven and earth' stand for the entire structure of things; now, however, he follows the order of operation. According to this view, the heaven created previously

and the firmament made here in the midst of the waters are one and the same.

This view was evidently held by Chrysostom, who also consistently maintained that there is only one heaven and not multiple celestial bodies beyond one. However, although many have followed him, led more by authority than by reason, in this particular aspect he should not be followed, because both the Scriptures, which often mention a third heaven and the heavens of heavens, and sense itself contradict this view. Hence, St. Ambrose asserts a different heaven, the one referred to here as the firmament and previously mentioned. The same view is held by St. Basil, John Damascene, as well as Bede and Strabo; however, these latter understand it as the starry heaven, previously mentioned. According to Augustine, however, it is a spiritual creation, that is, the angelic nature is understood.

Damascene, on the other hand, understands it as a certain spherical heaven without stars, which philosophers refer to, saying it is the ninth sphere and the prime mover, which moves with a diurnal motion.

However, as we have already explained, we understand all these [heavens] under the name as mentioned earlier; by the firmament, nearly everyone understands the starry heaven along with the orbits of the seven planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Mercury, Venus, and the Moon. Thus, we posit ten celestial bodies: the first and highest is the empyrean, in which there is rest and eternal life, adorned with the greatest light, which is the most fitting place for the blessed; the second is the aqueous or crystalline heaven, which is the first mobile, moving uniformly from the east to the west in the span of one day in a circular motion; the third is the starry heaven, adorned with fixed stars, which is drawn by the motion of the higher body in a diurnal motion — yet not lacking its own [motion] — from the west to the east, by which it is turned in a set period. Below

this heaven are seven heavens or spheres, or the orbits of the planets, arranged in the order as previously mentioned.

The ancient astronomers discovered nine celestial spheres beneath the first heaven, which is the foremost among the corporeal realms. They discerned up to the eighth sphere through observation, while the ninth was determined through reason, not by direct observation. However, beyond these nine celestial spheres, the existence of a tenth heaven, remaining fixed and tranquil, is not only believed by our scholars but also by some of the Hebrews. Indeed, Rabbi Isaac posited ten heavens and interprets the tenth sphere as designated by Ezekiel through the sapphire, in the likeness of a throne: as the color of sapphire signifies the brightness of light, the likeness of the throne signifies its immobility.

He also understands the ten spheres to be figured by Zechariah, through the golden lampstand distinguished by seven lamps and a lamp on top of it; yet above the lamp, two olives. Since the seven lamps indicate the seven planets, and the lamp represents the eighth circle glowing with so many lights, he suggests that the two olives indicate the ninth and tenth spheres. This is because, from olives, oil flows to lamps and lanterns to nourish the light; and from that highest heaven, which is the source of all light, light is infused through the sphere immediately below it into the other luminaries.

Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra, in his commentary on the Decalogue, also posits this tenth heaven. He suggests that the first commandment, the hidden precept on the tablets, which is "You shall love the Lord your God," as expressed in Deuteronomy, corresponds with the heaven we call the empyrean. He describes this heaven as hidden from us, emanating from the heart, hidden to all creation and known only to God. He then proceeds to outline how the other commandments correspond with the celestial spheres.

The Second Commandment - "You shall not worship any other god but the Lord your God," he says, aligns with the first mover, which influences all other spheres; thus, this commandment similarly draws all to follow one true God.

The Third Commandment - "You shall not take the name [of the Lord your God in vain]," corresponds with the starry heaven, where the twelve signs of the zodiac reside; thus, the divine name's power is manifested in twelve forms.

The Fourth Commandment - "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy," aligns with Saturn, the planet which occupies the seventh position in the celestial hierarchy.

The Fifth Commandment - "Honor your father and your mother," fits with Jupiter, the noble father of generation, which provides honor and life to those it favors.

The Sixth Commandment - "You shall not murder," corresponds with Mars, which governs war.

The Seventh Commandment - "You shall not commit adultery," aligns with Venus, the source of all pleasure.

The Eighth Commandment - "You shall not steal," corresponds with the Sun, which, like the eye of God, reveals all hidden thefts and opposes theft and robbery as it shines beneficently upon all.

The Ninth Commandment - "You shall not bear false witness," aligns with Mercury, which governs speech, through which truth or falsehood is expressed and blasphemy uttered.

The Tenth Commandment - "You shall not covet," corresponds with the Moon, the mother of the stars, which primarily embodies desire.

Therefore, they establish above the nine heavens a tenth, which theologians call the Empyrean. From this arises a marvelous proportion to the spiritual. For there are nine choirs of angels, like

the moving heavens; but there is one highest choir, which contains all others and itself remains immobile: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Returning to our point, when it is said here: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," by the firmament we understand the starry heaven along with all that it contains up to the moon: with the great luminaries and the stars described in the firmament as placed by God; by the upper waters, we mean the crystalline heaven, which is called the heaven of waters, due to a certain similarity in which it resembles water in its diaphaneity and clarity; it is also called crystalline because it is solid and transparent like crystal stone, and like water solidified by frost; by the lower waters, we understand the elements, or rather the matter of elements, which above was called water: "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters"; for it was still confused below the orbit of the moon, and mixed as a kind of mass of elements until the third day, when they received distinction and arrangement in their substance and places, as the nature of each required. And in this manner, the firmament serves as a divider between the waters and the waters, because it forms the intermediary between the crystalline heaven and the other elements.

Verse 7: And God made the firmament and divided the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament. And it was so.

In Hebrew: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיְבָדֵל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן.

In Chaldean: וַיַּעַבְדֵּי יְיָ יְהִי־רְקִיעָא וְאַפְרִישׁ בֵּין מַיָּא דִּי מִלְרַע לָרְקִיעָא וּבֵין מַיָּא דִּי מֵעַל לָרְקִיעָא וַיְהִי־כֵן: And God made the firmament, and divided the firmament between the waters which are under the firmament and the waters which are above the firmament. And it was so.

Some interpret the waters above the firmament as spiritual creatures and angelic minds, because it is written: "And the waters above the heavens praise the name of the Lord." This view is held by Origen.

However, this interpretation is challenged by St. Basil and Ambrose, who argue not because the waters are said to praise the name of the Lord that they should be spiritual creatures, but because their contemplation, when prudently considered beyond mere sense, accomplishes the glorification of the Creator. Otherwise, according to this form of interpretation, dew, frost, cold, and heat, which in Daniel are commanded to praise the Creator with hymns, would also be some kind of minds endowed with intellect and invisible.

Rabbi Solomon interprets the waters above the firmament to mean waters suspended in the air.

Regarding the nature of the firmament, different scholars hold different views. Aristotle and all the Peripatetics maintain that the celestial body is neither composed of the simple bodies known as elements, nor does it consist of them, because simple bodies inherently move in a straight line, with lighter bodies moving upwards and heavier bodies moving downwards; whereas moving up and down is not the same as moving in a circular path, which is characteristic of the heavens. Where the natural motions differ, the essences must also differ. Moreover, anything composed of corruptible elements must necessarily dissolve; however, no change or decay is observed in the heavens or their parts, whereas all earthly elements are subject to various changes. Because of these logical necessities, the Peripatetics posited the existence of a fifth type of new corporeal essence for the constitution of the heavens and stars, which is neither hot nor cold, wet nor dry; but they suggest that the most excellent powers of the elements must be considered as causative in the heavens: in the spheres of elements below the moon, their natures according to their forms; and in compounds, by a

certain participation; but they categorically deny that the natures of the elements themselves exist in the heavens.

Plato and all the Academics assert that the heavens are composed of the four elements and that in the heavens both the powers and natures of these elements exist; however, these powers reside in a category far superior to that found here on Earth, and the most excellent natures are also present in the heavens. They believe that the nature of fire provides the heavens with visible light, life-giving warmth, and rapid motion. The nature of earth grants solidity and firm stability; it also contributes to the density of the stars, which allows them to be seen, and to the moon, which enables it to reflect the sun's rays. The nature of air provides the clear quality they call translucence; the nature of water brings delicate and uniformly gentle softness, and imparts to the very rims of the spheres, where they touch each other, the power of cold and moisture. This ensures that, although they touch each other with the swiftest and most vehement motion due to their rapid movement, no excessive heat or dissolution occurs there.

Furthermore, they assert that the heavens are truly hot and truly cold, wet and dry, as they clearly manifest the qualities of the elements. The stars shine like flames, and their rays carry heat that warms earthly things beneath the heavens. They argue that claiming the heavens produce this effect through motion contradicts both reason and perception; perception-wise: because we frequently observe bodies near us moving far more vehemently and quickly, yet these bodies do not heat other objects as the heavens do; moreover, we distinctly feel bodies becoming hot under the summer sun's rays, which would not happen unless the rays themselves contained heat, and they would not contain heat unless the heavens themselves were hot. This also contradicts reason: because motion, which is an action of a moving body dependent on a mover, inherently produces only that effect which the mover naturally seeks to produce. Indeed, local

motion leads inherently to the acquisition of a place; but if heating or any other quality follows, it is incidental. However, since heat from the heavens pervades all, nurtures all, imparts life to all, completes the generation of all things, purifies all, preserves and enlivens all, it is illogical to assume these effects from the heavens are incidental. Therefore, it cannot be denied that the heavens are hot, but not burning; nor should it be said that the sun's light heats only by reflection, or burns only [by reflection]. For the reflected rays of the moon do not heat anything, since the power of water dominates in it; however, the sun's rays do heat beneficially due to the fiery and life-giving nature of the sun.

The argument that the slower motion of the Moon results in its rays not heating should not be raised. Even though the Moon's motion is considered slower, it is much closer to Earth than the Sun, suggesting that it should, if not equally, at least somewhat heat, if heating is indeed solely due to the reflection of rays. Nor should one claim that heat is a property unique to fire; for the less it mixes with foreign material, the less it burns. However, light is a property of fire; the purer it is, the more luminous it becomes, although not necessarily more visible to certain eyes, and it illuminates further and earlier than it heats, providing light and heat instantaneously, with the heated object retaining heat for a while after the fire has gone; light, however, is not imparted to anything as it is inherent to fire itself; indeed, when the fire goes out, so does the light. Therefore, if there is light in the heavens, there must also be fire.

Platonists resolve the arguments of the Peripatetics, especially the one derived from motion, by stating that there is only one natural and simple motion, namely circular; for straight motion is not simple, as it gradually becomes faster; nor is it according to the nature of the element, because it does not suit it in its proper place, but rather represents a return to nature; it is not inherently set apart from violence but is forcibly placed outside its proper place.

Therefore, from the fact that fire appears to move upwards while the heavens move circularly, it should not be assumed that the heavens are not composed of a fiery nature. For if any part of the heavens were placed in the middle, it would immediately ascend straight upwards, seeking its origin along the shortest path. That both fire and air move circularly is demonstrated by the paths of comets.

Responding to the second argument, the view that the heavens do not decay is supported both by the purity of their material and because the celestial substance possesses such a potent reconciling force that qualities and motions, which are antagonistic here on Earth, do not conflict there. Additionally, it is suggested that there, the elements were transformed into the form of the most excellent element, that is fire, right from the creation of the world; just as through celestial motion, the four elements here are reduced to one unified form in any creation. Furthermore, the heavens are uncorrupted because there is nothing external that can damage them. Lastly, it is according to the will of the Creator, which, as Plato says in the *Timaeus*, is a bond stronger and more indissoluble than any other.

This is the Platonic view, which is highly regarded by the Hebrews. Rabbi Solomon indeed says that the heavens are composed of water and fire. He also explains the current discussion of the work of the firmament by saying: "Let there be a firmament, the firmament was hardened, because although the heavens were created on the first day, they were still moist, or fluid; and they were coagulated, or condensed on the second day by the rebuke of God in His word: 'Let there be a firmament.' And this is what is written: 'The pillars of heaven tremble,' meaning all of the first day and on the second they were astonished, like a man stunned, and stood from the rebuke and terror upon them." By this, he interprets the word "Let" not as the induction of a substantial form, but as the superinduction of a certain quality, namely hardness and density or stability, and thus "He

made," i.e., He stabilized it in its stability. He says that to make here is like in the phrase: "A woman shall adorn her nails," which in Hebrew refers to a captive woman whom a man wishes to take as a wife.

St. Ambrose appears to hold the same view among our scholars, asserting that the heavens are composed from existing materials. St. Basil also leans towards this view, asserting that the idea of a fifth essence is a fictitious one and devised by the philosophers themselves. Bede also speaks on this matter, saying: "Thus the firmament is the starry heaven, which is believed to have been made from waters; for crystal, a stone of great firmness and clarity, is made from waters." Theodoret, from the Greeks, asserts that the heavens were formed from the fluid nature of waters and what was once a liquefiable nature has become most solid, and for this reason it is called the firmament. Gennadius likewise asserts that God named the firmament from the workmanship of the thing itself, because its nature, previously slack, flowing, and dissolvable, received a solid and minimally movable consistency. St. Augustine also readily agrees with those who claim the heavens are of a fiery nature, from which the stars and luminaries are conjectured to have been made, that fiery light having been shaped into the forms we see in the heavens.

From the opinion of such great men, it seems more reasonable to agree with this position, both because reason supports it and it is more in accord with Sacred Scripture.

Regarding the following phrase: "And it was so," Rabbi Aben Ezra says that it adheres to what follows after it, namely that God called the firmament heaven.

Verse 8: And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

In Hebrew: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי.

In Chaldean: וַיִּקְרָא יְיָ לָרָקִיעַא שָׁמַיָא וַהֲוֵה־רִמָּשׁ וַהֲוֵה־צֶפֶר יוֹם תִּינָנִין: And God called the firmament Heaven. And it was evening and it was morning, the second day.

Rabbi Solomon gives three interpretations for the name שָׁמַיִם (heaven): "שָׁמַיִם, שֵׁם מֵיִם, אֵשׁ" meaning that God mixed fire (אֵשׁ) and water (מֵיִם) to create the heavens. Hence, he says, the firmament is called "heaven" because it was made from fire and water. Rabbi Aben Ezra notes that God named five things: light, darkness, heaven, earth, and Adam (which means human in Hebrew).

St. Ambrose explains this passage by stating that "heaven" is a common name because Scripture testifies to multiple heavens: but "firmament" is a specific name; so that earlier [in the beginning] it appears he spoke of heaven in general to encompass the entire celestial creation, but here he refers specifically to the solidity of this [outer] firmament, which is called the heaven's firmament, as we read in the prophetic hymn: "Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven." He thinks that this firmament is called "heaven" due to its strength, because it is not weak or slack, having been made firm by divine power, as Scripture says: "Praise him in the firmament of his power."

St. Basil provides another reason why the naming of the heavens should correspond and be suited to the other, and why the firmament should share in the name by similarity. The term for heaven, τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, is derived from the verb ὁρᾶσθαι, meaning "to be seen"; hence, due to its visibility, the air is also referred to as heaven, as when Scripture says: "the birds of the heaven," etc. Origen states that God called the firmament "heaven," granting it the name of the heaven that was created before, that is, he made it worthy of the name which also applies to the empyrean, both because of its

vastness and because it is higher than all things visible to us, and utterly sublime.

It is noteworthy that on the second day, it is not stated: "And God saw that it was good." The Hebrew text does not include this phrase, nor is it found in our Vulgate edition. I suspect that the Septuagint included it, or that it was added by someone else to their translation, since St. Basil, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose all discuss it.

We must now address why Moses did not say on this day, "And God saw that it was good." Some suggest it is due to the dual nature of the firmament, which is considered formless because it is the first to deviate from unity; hence, even the unclean animals were led into the ark two by two. Jerome presents this argument in [his writings against] Jovinian. However, this explanation does not satisfy everyone, as it is mystical and should not obstruct the truth of the matter; if indeed this was truly good and perfect, what risk was there in stating in this place that God saw and approved it?

Rabbi Solomon, in exploring why it is not stated here, "And God saw that it was good," responds: "Because the work of the waters was not completed until the third day, and on the third day the work of the waters and another [creation] were completed; therefore, he says, on the third day it is stated 'that it was good' twice; once for the completion of the work of the second day, and once for the completion of the work of the third day." This reasoning is also suggested by the Gloss, following Jerome's reasoning, stating that "good" is not mentioned here because the separation of the waters was not yet perfected, which occurs subsequently.

However, since the specific work of this day was the firmament itself, it seems more convincing to me that Moses refrained from saying "that it was good" because the firmament was still imperfect, lacking its decoration of stars, in which its ultimate beauty consists.

This perfection was achieved on the fourth day, and therefore it is there said: "God saw that it was good."

Verse 9: And God said: Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so.

In Hebrew: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתֵרָאָה הַיַּבֵּשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן.

In Chaldean: וַאֲמַר יי יתכנשוני מֵיָא מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיָא לְאַתֵּר חָד וְתִתְחַזֵּי יַבְשָׁתָא וְהָוָה׃ כֵּן: "And God said, etc., as above."

Rabbi Aben Ezra interprets the word קוה (gather) by the root חבר, in the hithpael form: let the waters gather themselves, coalesce, or convene.

St. John Chrysostom explains this gathering of the waters as follows: "Since all was covered by waters, He commanded the multitude of waters to gather into one congregation, so that the dry land might appear"; for the earth was invisible and unformed, being covered by the waters. St. Basil and Ambrose express the same idea; they understand by waters and earth these elements that are presented to our eyes, and the entire earth was covered by water; for this reason, it was invisible and unfertile: but by the divine command, the water rushed down to the valleys and hollows of the earth, and thus the dry land, which had been submerged under water, appeared.

Rabbi Solomon asserts the same, stating that "the waters were spread over the entire earth, and were gathered into the ocean, which is the great sea among all seas."

Rabbi Aben Ezra says that "this verse is connected with the previous ones, since the firmament was not made until the earth had dried out. And the evidence is: 'On the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens; and behold, they were made in one day; and vision is the hidden word; and congregations from dispersion is not creation.'

And so the meaning of it is: And God had already said: 'Let the waters be gathered.' And this is similar in the law in a hundred places; and behold, in Genesis I will give you two testimonies. One is: 'And there he placed the man whom He had formed;' and afterwards it says: 'The Lord God brought forth;' and yet He had produced them before man. And the second testimony: that He commanded the man not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and afterwards it is written: 'And the Lord God formed man from the earth.' But his explanation is that He had already formed him: and therefore, he says, it is that: 'And God saw that it was good,' is joined with the creation of the second day; and 'Let the earth bring forth,' is the beginning of the third day."

St. Augustine, however, since he interpreted the waters above as the very matter itself, explains in the same context, saying that if he had called a certain confusion of matter by the name of waters, this gathering is to be understood as the actual formation, so that such would be the appearance of the waters as we now see them. And the phrase: 'Let the dry land appear,' which is placed, can be understood as the formation of the earth, so that the earth would have this appearance that we see; it was called invisible and unformed when it still lacked the form of matter.

Therefore, we explain in accordance with St. Augustine's interpretation as follows: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together," that is, let the corporeal matter be formed into what we perceive as water. For God did not make the waters gather as they had previously existed, but as giving them form and nature, by which they are aptly brought together in one place. And "let the dry land appear," that is, let it take on a visible form and be distinct from the confusion. It is not commanded to appear as if it had existed before, but to receive a form and nature by which it could appear and be seen. Thus, the gathering of the waters into one place

is nothing other than receiving a unified appearance and inclination together toward a suitable and appropriate place for its kind.

However, since the waters' existence and inclination to their particular position is immediate above and around the earth, due to being a nobler and less heavy element, just as air is placed above both as light, and fire above the air as lighter; it would harm the greater and more universal good if waters covered the earth everywhere: for then the earth could not produce its fruits, nor could animals be preserved, nor could plants survive; therefore, God made the waters gather into one place, received in the concaves and precipitous basins of the earth and gathered as if in a bladder, so they would not spread to cover the land, and the dry land would appear on the higher surface.

However, it should not be said that the waters are forcibly detained there and designated to their own place, when their proper place is above the earth, so that, if left to themselves, they would flow over the land and return to cover it, as if attaining their peculiar place; although some say they are much higher than the land in the middle of the ocean, this is not actually true. We visually observe that water always moves to lower places; hence those higher waters would flow to the shore if this place is lower. It is natural for water to tend equilaterally towards the center everywhere; and lower places are closer to the center.

Let no one say that divine power holds the waters in place against their nature, as they are apt and capable; for this view is countered by Augustine, who states that God governs the things He has created in such a way that "He allows them to perform their natural motions"; and as St. Dionysius excellently teaches, it is not of God to violate the natures of things, but to moderate them with His wisdom. Thus, God has tempered the natures of the waters so as not to allow them to be scattered everywhere covering the entire earth

and to be excessive; nor, however, has He completely removed them from their own and natural place lest they somehow remain above the earth. But by the command of His power, He gathers and collects them in the lower hollows and deep caverns of the earth's bottom, bestowing upon them their rightful place above the earth, so that the basin of all waters is beneath the land.

Yet God subjected the earth to the waters in such a way that the dry land, which He commanded to appear, protrudes above the surrounding waters, according to the Psalm: "Who laid the foundations of the earth upon the waters." For the earth is not carried by lighter waters being heavier; but, as Augustine splendidly explains, the earth is said to be founded upon the waters because it stands out above the encircling waters. We always observe that the shores of both seas and rivers are higher than the waters; even if in the middle the waters seem to rise higher, it is not because they elevate above the shores, but because their basin is deeper and closer to the center. However, the place of waters is always lower than the dry land, especially that of the ocean, where all waters converge. If the place of the ocean were not lower, why would rivers flow more towards it than elsewhere, if waters always descend to the lowest places? This is also evident from this: for those going to the sea are said to descend, as Rabbi Aben Ezra here attests, and we find this many times in Scripture, such as: "They that go down to the sea in ships;" and of Jonah, when he fled from the presence of the Lord to Tarshish..., he went down to Joppa and found a ship.

The question arises as to how all waters are said to be gathered into one place when there are multiple bodies of water. Besides the Ocean, which is the largest, there are the Tyrrhenian, Adriatic, Indian, Egyptian seas, the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Dardanelles, the Black Sea, the Aegean, the Ionian, the Atlantic, and other inland seas; yet it is said that the waters were gathered into one place because all waters tend towards one main body, that is, the

great ocean, to which all are connected; and even if some lakes appear confined within themselves, they still flow into the sea through hidden channels. Well-diggers also prove this, for all land is filled with invisible veins of water, which originate from the sea.

Verse 10: And God called the dry land "earth," and the gatherings of the waters He called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

Hebrew: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לַיַּבְשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:
(Vayikra Elohim layabbashah eretz ulemikveh hamayim kara yamim vayar Elohim ki-tov)

"And God called the dry land 'earth' and the gatherings of the waters 'seas'; and God saw that it was good."

Chaldean: וַיִּקְרָא יְיָ לַיַּבְשֶׁתָּא אֶרְעָא וּלְבֵית כְּנִישוּת מַיָּא קָרָא יָמַי וַהֲזָא יְיָ אֶרֶץ טָב:
(Vekara YYa leyabeshta' ar'a ulebeit kenisut maya kara yemamei vahaza YYa arei tav)

"And the Lord called the dry land 'earth' and the gathering place of the waters 'seas'; and the Lord saw that it was good."

D. Basil and Ambrose explain this passage, noting that dryness or aridity, or indeed the dry, is something that naturally delineates and expresses the nature of its subject; while earth itself is a somewhat bare and slight term for a thing. Just as it is specific to humans to be endowed with reason, the word "human" signifies an animal to which that specific trait applies; similarly, dryness is specific and characteristic of the earth. Therefore, to whom dryness and aridity are appropriately assigned, that is called earth; just as to whom a unique and peculiar trait like the ability to neigh applies, that is named a horse. Thus, dryness is an expression of nature; hence, even that which abounds in water has the capacity to possess dryness. For, water being removed, it begins to be dry, as it is written: "He turns rivers into a desert, and the springs of water into thirsty ground," that is, He made the watery earth dry.

Not only is this so on earth, but also in other elements. Each one indeed possesses its own quality, through which it is distinguished from the others, and by which the nature of each is recognized. Water has the specific quality of coldness; air indeed has humidity; fire, on the other hand, has heat; these are the primary qualities, each unique and particular to the respective elements; although none of them is absolutely solitary, pure and simple: but the earth is dry and cold; water is cold and moist; air is moist and hot; fire is hot and dry. And so, through these paired qualities, the elements intermix; for earth, being of dry and cold quality, is connected to water through the kinship of coldness; and water to air, because air is moist. Therefore, water, as if with two arms of coldness and moisture, seems to embrace both earth and air: the earth with cold, the air with moisture. Air also, being in the middle between two naturally opposing elements, that is, between water and fire, reconciles both elements to itself, since it is joined to water by moisture and to fire by heat. Fire, too, being naturally hot and dry, is connected to air by heat: and by dryness it flows back into a communion and association with earth; and thus, through this circuit and a certain chorus of harmony and association, they come together. Hence, they are called in Greek στοιχεῖα (stoicheia), which we call 'elements' in Latin, because they agree and harmonize with each other.

However, we have come to this point because Scripture says that God called the dry land earth, which means that what is principal in it, God called the property of nature. For the natural property of the earth is dryness: this prerogative is preserved as principal for it. Therefore, dryness underlies also that it may be cold: but secondary qualities are not preferred over primary ones.

And He called the gatherings of the waters seas. According to the idiom of the Hebrew language, every gathering of waters, whether they are salty or fresh, are called seas, and not just the ocean. Hence, in the Gospel, we frequently read of the Sea of Galilee and of

Tiberias, although in fact it is a lake, which Luke called the Lake of Gennesaret.

Porphry, who criticized the Evangelists for calling a lake a sea to make, as he claims, a miracle to those who are ignorant that the Lord walked on the sea, was unaware of this peculiarity of the Hebrew dialect. Foolish! Is it less of a miracle to walk on the fluid waters of a pond than to tread the waves of the sea? The miracle is to have trodden on the waves, whether of the sea or of a lake.

But a doubt arises, when previously the Lord commanded that the waters be gathered in one place, why then does he call the gatherings of waters seas? Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra says: "It is so stated because there is no name for the sea that encircles the entire earth." D. Ambrose responds that "there is one gathering of waters, because a continuous wave from the Indian Ocean to the coast of Gades, and from there into the Red Sea, surrounds the extremities of the earth with an enclosing ocean: internally, the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Adriatic, and other seas are mixed, distinguished by names, not by waves. ... Hence, there is one general collection, which is called the sea, and many collections, which are called seas according to regions. Just as many lands, like Africa, Spain, Thrace, Macedonia, Syria, Egypt, Gaul, and Italy are called by regional names, and there is one earth: so many are called seas by local names, and there is one sea, as the Prophet says: 'The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; You have founded the world and all that fills it, You have created the north and the sea'."

"And God saw that it was good." Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra suggests that this phrase links with the creation on the second day. D. Basil and Ambrose attribute this commendation to the sea, noting that it refers to the gathering of waters, not suggesting that some pleasing view of the sea appeared to God; for God does not look with eyes at

the beauties of creation, but contemplates what happens through ineffable wisdom.

“Therefore, the sea is first good because it necessarily supports the lands with moisture, which it supplies through certain hidden channels, providing not useless nourishment; the sea is good, as a host for rivers, a source of rain, a channel for floods, a conveyor of supplies, by which distant peoples are connected, by which the dangers of battles are removed, by which barbaric fury is contained: a support in necessities, a refuge in dangers, a delight in pleasures, a health in wellness, a connector of the separated, a shortcut of travel, an escape for those who labor, a support for taxes, a nourishment for barrenness. From this, rain is poured onto the lands; indeed, water is drawn from the sea by the rays of the sun, and its finer part is swept away: then, the higher it is raised, the more it also cools by the shadow of clouds, and becomes rain, which not only tempers earthly dryness but also fertilizes barren fields.”

However, Bede, explaining this passage, says: “The earth had not yet produced vegetation, nor had the water brought forth living creatures, yet it is said that God saw that it was good, with the waters receding and the dry land appearing, because the evaluator of the universe, foreseeing the future, praises what are as if already perfected.” This interpretation greatly appeals to me, to say that it was good when the waters were separated and the dry land appeared. Clearly, the utility of this separation is evident, both for the preservation of terrestrial animals and for the fruits of the earth and crops. Afterward, the earth was no longer empty and void, but made accessible to sight, peacefully adorned with green herbs and plants, also decorated with river flowers, so that, enriched with its own fruits, it would yield sweet produce and very pleasing sustenance to living creatures. Therefore, immediately it receives the power of germination by its own nature from God, the giver of all, as it is added:

Verse 11 Let the earth bring forth green herb, and yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth. And it was so.

Hebrew: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשָּׂא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֹשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְרִי: (Vayomer Elohim tadshe ha-aretz deshe esev mazria zera, etz pri oseh peri le-mino asher zaro-bo al-ha'aretz vayehi-chen).

Aramaic: וַאֲמַר יְיָ תְּדַאִית אֶרְעָא דִּיתְאָה עֵישָׁבָא דְּבַר־זֶרְעִיהּ מִיזְדְּרַע אֵילָן פִּירִין: (Va'ama YYa tada'eit ar'aa diytoa ivseba d'bar-zareih miz'dra ilan peirin a'vaid peirin li'zneih di bar-zareih bei al-ar'aa vahavah-ken).

Latin: And God said: Let the earth produce vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with their seed in them. And it was so.

Rabbi David Kimchi distinguishes between דשא (deshe) and עשב (esev), stating that דשא, with six points, signifies a sprout and is so called when it first emerges from the earth; and as it grows, it is called עשב, that is, grass, because the term דשא represents the beginning of growth in grass. Therefore, the term דשא derives from an action verb similar to צמח (tzamach), meaning to sprout, and not from עשב. Rabbi Aben Ezra also says that here תדשא (tadshe) is akin to תצמיח (tatzmiach), meaning to sprout. Rabbi Solomon says that דשא and עשב are not the same, nor should one say תעשיב הארץ (ta'ashiv ha'aretz) because the species of דשאים (deshain), each divided in its own substance, are called some type of grass. Nor should the term be interpreted to refer to any particular or determined sprout, for דשא means the covering of the earth, like the fullness of sprouts. Therefore, "let the earth sprout," that is, be filled and covered with a carpet of grass. In Latin, דשא is frequently translated as ערב (erev), grass; although in Scripture, דשא is often taken for עשב, and vice versa, because they are very similar.

Additionally, in our Vulgate Translation, "yielding seed" in Hebrew is "seminificans semen"; similarly, "Let the earth bring forth," in Hebrew is תוצא (totsa), meaning "let it cause to emerge," which, like many other almost infinite nuances, our Translator has wisely adapted into the Latin phrase, as the Septuagint translators did in Greek; although they are far more fortunate in crafting and marking names, therefore they often come closer to the Hebrew than we do.

Now the meaning of these words must be clarified. Thus, it says: Let the earth sprout herb, or sprout, etc. Some interpret this to mean: let it sprout, that is, let it take and have the power and ability to generate; which seems to have been the opinion of St. Augustine. St. John Chrysostom explains differently, saying: "The Lord commanded, and immediately the earth, hastening to mature its offspring, busied itself with sprouting seeds: And the earth brought forth grass, hay, etc., noting here that by the word of the Lord all things were made upon the earth." This interpretation appeared much more probable to others, both because it better fits the meaning of the words and because they say it shows that God wanted to demonstrate how, without intermediary causes, He could perfectly and instantly produce all the effects of intermediary causes, as He is omnipotent and acts by will, not by necessity of nature: just as He wanted to form man by Himself and all the kinds of animals: for this indeed had to be perfect in the beginning.

St. Basil explains this passage as follows: "The earth, having shaken off and set aside the weight of water, as it rested for a while and breathed more freely, received in accordance with the order of nature a decree by which it was commanded to first produce grass, and then wood: which even to this day we see happening. For that voice given then was the first command, like a law of nature, an institution imprinted and inscribed into the earth, granting it the ability to germinate and bear fruit."

However, we believe that along with Basil, this law of germination and bearing fruit was indeed prescribed to the earth by this command of God, and with Augustine, that the earth received the power to germinate, and at the same time with Chrysostom, that then by this command of God, without the effect of any secondary causes, the earth produced sprouts, herbs, and fruits, should be appropriately understood in this word. For that it received this law of germination and fruit bearing, the things we continue to see to this day prove: and that it then received the power to germinate, reason clearly proves, for it shows us the effects. For the earth would in no way have produced its offspring and sprouts unless it had received power from God, the giver of all. That it immediately matured its offspring and produced sprouts, herbs, and fruits is proven by the text that follows immediately:

Verse 12 And the earth brought forth green herb, and yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit, wherein is the seed of each according to its kind.

Hebrew: וַתוֹצֵא הָאֲרֶץ דָּשָׁא עֹשֶׂב מְזֵרִיעַ זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ פֶּרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרַעוֹ-בּוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ (Vatosie ha'aretz deshe esev mazria zera le-minehu ve'etz oseh-peri asher zaro-bo le-minehu).

Aramaic: וַאֲפִיקַת אֲרֻעָא דִּיתָאָה עִשְׂבָּא דְּבִרְ-זֶרְעִיהָ מִינְדָּרְעָה לְזִנְוָהִי וְאִילָן עֵבִיד- (Ve'apeikat ar'aa diyteah ivseba d'var-zareih miyudra liznohi ve'ilan aveid-peirein d'var-zareih beh liznohi): And the earth brought forth grass, the herb yielding seed after its kind, and a tree making fruit, wherein is the seed of each according to its kind.

Aben Ezra explains, "Whose seed is in itself according to its kind," because each seed preserves its own species. Rabbi Solomon interprets "yielding seed" as "that within it, namely the herb, its own seed may grow for seeding from it in another place"; and regarding "fruit-bearing tree": עֵץ פֶּרִי (etz peri), he says it is "as if the tree has

produced laden with fruits: because it is not simply making these. The earth produced a tree bearing fruit and not a tree of fruits, it must be explained that, when Adam was cursed for his transgression, the earth too was visited and cursed." And on "whose seed is in itself," he comments that "there are grains or seeds in all fruits, from which the tree germinates, as if someone had planted it." Rabbi Aben Ezra here notes that it is said: "תִּדְשָׁא הָאָרֶץ, יִשְׂרָצוּ, תֹּוצֵא", let it sprout, let it swarm, let it bring forth," and behold, power was placed in the earth and in the water to act at the command of God, and this is creation."

Verse 13 And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

Hebrew: וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: (Vayar Elohim ki-tov vayehi-erev vayehi-boker yom shlishi).

Aramaic: וַחֲזָא יְיָ אַרְי־טָב וַחֲזָא־רִמָּשׁ וַחֲזָא־צִפְרָא יוֹם תְּלִיתָאִי: (Vachaza YYa arei-tav vahavah-remash vahavah-tzefar yom telita'ei): And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

This commendation of the third day is noted for the usefulness of the earth's produce. However, it raises questions for many as to why the Lord would want harmful herbs, thorns, and thistles, and certain shrubs, which seem fruitless, to sprout from the earth. St. Augustine responded that many such plants have uses, although they may seem useless and harmful to us who are ignorant of their natures, and are necessary for the beauty of the universe. Alternatively, we might say that after the fall of man, as a punishment for sin, the earth brought forth these plants by the command of God, when it was said to Adam by the Lord: "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

Verse 14 – 15 And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs,

and for seasons, and for days, and years; and let them give light upon the earth. And it was so.

Hebrew: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: (Vayomer Elohim yehi me'orot birki'a hashamayim lehavdil bein hayom uvein halailah vehayu le'otot ulemo'adim uleyamim veshanim. Vehayu lim'orot birki'a hashamayim leha'ir al-ha'aretz vayehi-ken): That is, And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for set times, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. And it was so.

Aramaic: וַאֲמַר יְיָ יְהוֹן נְהוֹרֵינ בְּרָקִיעָא דְשָׁמַיָא לְאַפְרָשָׂא בֵּין יַמָּא וּבֵין לַיְלָא וְיִהְיוּ לְאֹתֵין וּלְזִמְנֵין וּלְמִינֵי־בְהוֹן יוֹמִין וּשְׁנָיִן וְיִהְיוּ לְנְהוֹרֵין בְּרָקִיעָא דְשָׁמַיָא לְאַנְהָרָא: (Va'amar YYa yehon nehoreen birkiya' dishmaya le'afrasha bein yemama uvein leilya vihon le'ateen ulezimneen u'leminai-behon yomeen ushneen vihon linhoreen birkiya' dishmaya leanhara al-ar'a vahavah-ken): That is, And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to separate between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for appointed times, and to count therein days and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to illuminate upon the earth. And it was so.

Rabbi Aben Ezra states that the word יְהִי (yehi) is יִהְיֶה (yihyeh), because its meaning is plural and יִהְיֶה serves for both singular and plural, and also for feminine, as in: "If there be a virgin girl, etc." Rabbi Solomon interprets this passage by saying that "the lights were created on the first day, and on the fourth day it was commanded that they be set in the firmament; thus, all creation of heaven and earth was made on the first day, but each was established on its own day as it was decreed upon them. And this is what is written: אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם (et hashamayim), to multiply its generations, and

אֶת הָאָרֶץ (et ha'aretz), to multiply its generations." He then states that in the word מֵאֲרֹת (me'orot), the letter ו (vav) is missing, because it is a day of curse, as scurvy may afflict children; therefore, they fast on the fourth day because of scurvy, that it may not afflict children."

"To divide between the day and the night," he says this was done "to replace the original light; but in the first seven days, the original light and darkness served: this in the day and that in the night. And let them be for signs: when the lights are eclipsed, it is a bad sign for the world, as it is said: 'Do not be afraid of the signs of heaven': and in doing so, it was not necessary according to God's will, but fear from retribution. And for appointed times: for the future, because Israel was to come, who is commanded concerning appointed times, or festivals, and these are counted by the full moon. And days: the sun serves the middle part of the day, and the moon serves the other half: behold a perfect day. And years: at the end of three hundred sixty-five days they complete their courses or paths in the twelve signs of their planets, and it is a year; and besides this, they serve to illuminate the world." This is Rabbi Solomon's interpretation of these words.

Aben Ezra initially explains this passage as follows: "For signs of the dots and for appointed times of the hours; and it fits that they are for signs concerning the eclipses of the sun and moon and the leap in the likeness of the stars, because the stars themselves are the cause of the likeness, or sign, that is seen"; and regarding the word לִמְעֹרֹת (leme'orot), he states that "ל (lamed) is an added letter and superfluous, and it says nothing." Discussing the firmament, he presents the opinion of Rabbi Sepharaddi. He says, "The wise Rabbi Sepharaddi stated that the firmament is divided into eight parts: seven stars, and the sphere of signs." However, Aben Ezra does not agree with this opinion; he argues that it does not fit because "there is no body above the sphere of signs. And behold, Scripture says: In the firmament of heaven, to teach that there is a heaven above it; and

thus: The heavens of the heavens; and: To ride upon the heaven of heavens prow; and $\square\aleph$ in this place is not the east, that is, it is not manifest. And Gaon Rabbi Saadia — may the memory of the righteous be a blessing — fled from this place; and it is right in my eyes that the sun, the moon, and all the stars are lights in the firmament, because that is where they are seen." Thus, Aben Ezra himself holds that the firmament is the air, as he has explained above.

We, however, not deviating from the path of the Saints, explain this passage thus: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, that is, the bodies of the sun, moon, and stars, which are the vehicles of that primary light created on the first day, for, as we have previously explained from St. Basil and St. John of Damascus, a luminary is both a bearer of light and a vehicle of light. Therefore, the luminaries, from that first light which made day and night, were established on this fourth day according to the nature of their orbits, their parts having been condensed into a greater density: for a star is a denser part of its orbit. This was done by the divine hand, that is, by power, in the manner of a vessel receptive to the primary light.

Indeed, these things were made, as were all other things, for the supreme glory of God, for the Lord has wrought all for His own sake, but they are particularly for the benefit and utility of man; not that man might worship them, but that they might serve and provide for man. Hence, Scripture says: Lest, when you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun, the moon, and all the stars of heaven, you are led astray and worship them and serve those which the Lord your God has created to serve all nations. Therefore, here the functions and services of the luminaries are described by Moses. Firstly: to divide day and night. For the sun creates the day by carrying light around itself and, as St. Basil says, one would not go astray if, in defining the day, one were to say it is the air illuminated by the sun, or the duration of time during which the sun moves over the earth in

our hemisphere; for this reason, the sun is said to be created for the power of the day, while the moon and the stars are for the power of the night. And here, night is not taken for darkness, or for the absence of solar light, as was the night on the first day: for that night was made by the absence of solar light; but in the term night here we also understand something positive, since it has its own luminaries, which were made for the power of the night, by which the night exists: and it acquires certain qualities through these luminaries, to serve human life. For man cannot always work; sometimes he must rest, and the night provides the time for peaceful relaxation of the limbs and rejuvenation of the senses after the day has allotted time for working. Thus, this is the first duty of the luminaries.

The second function of the luminaries is that through them, many signs are often indicated, such as rain, clear weather, heat, winds, and other such things, which are brought about by them and are mostly known and experienced by farmers, sailors, and physicians: and this is what is meant by "And let them be for signs." Many understand the phrase "Let them be for signs and seasons" as an example of hendiadys, meaning signs of the times, as St. Augustine reports.

The third function concerns the times they introduce, hence it says: "And let them be for seasons." Here, 'time' is not taken in the sense defined by physicists as the number and measure of motion, but some say it should be understood according to the natural variations caused by the position and influence of the stars. For the time of day is different from the time of night; thus, a variety of tasks is required, just as morning and evening are different, so too is one day from another, one month from another: a new moon is different from a waning one; and through these, the year is divided into spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Indeed, this variety of times is brought about by the luminaries themselves through their approach to and

recession from our hemisphere toward the solstices, either winter or summer.

This interpretation of the passage, which I dare not dispute, is supported by the authority of the most learned and holy men, whose ingenuity is always commendable and whose sanctity is admirable. However, the Hebrew Truth seems to suggest a different understanding of this place; where our reading has "for seasons," it reads וּלְמוֹעָדִים (u'lemo'adim). This word does not signify the time that is previously mentioned, as it is rather understood later when it says: "for days and years"; instead, מוֹעָדִים (mo'adim) here refers to appointed days and solemn times, which the Hebrews call so from the notion of testimony and admonition, or rather from the gathering of the assembly to celebrate divine solemnities, from the word יָעַד (ya'ad), which denotes the setting of a time and the convening of sacred councils.

These days are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, and the sun and moon are their indicators; for such days are celebrated and recur according to the courses of the sun and moon. The first type of time is called in Hebrew עֵת (et); the second type מוֹעֵד (mo'ed), or זְמַן (zman), as the Chaldean text also has it. The Septuagint also does not translate this as χρόνος (chronous), which would mean time itself, but as καιρός (kairous), which denotes the occasion and opportunity for actions well conducted, what some call ἄνθος τοῦ χρόνου (anthos tou chronou), that is, the flower of time, implying the most select and opportune moment.

The fourth duty of the luminaries is to provide a variety of times, through which temporal events are measured and their duration and continuity are determined; and this is what is added: "And for days and years"; for days are most clearly brought about and distinguished from one another by the revolutions of the luminaries, and are multiplied by numbers. Moreover, the sun and moon are

appointed as the principal means for marking years. For the moon, having completed its course twelve times, brings about a year, except for the intercalary month, which often seems necessary for the most precise alignment of times; this is how the Hebrews and the very ancient Greeks once measured the year. A solar year occurs when the sun returns by its own motion to the same point or sign from which it began.

The fifth and final duty of the luminaries is to shed light upon the earth; this also contributes both to acquiring knowledge of many things through sight and the eyes, and to directing various human actions, operations, and affairs, which could not be accomplished by humans without light. This is what is added: "To give light upon the earth." And it was so; for all things, as they were commanded, have never ceased to be carried out.

Verse 16 – 18 God created two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night, along with the stars. He set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth and to govern day and night and to separate light from darkness.

The term לְמִשְׁלֵט (lememshelet) translates as "for dominion" or "authority," implying the power or governance that these celestial bodies were meant to exert over day and night. The Septuagint, striving to preserve the integrity of the Hebrew, translates this into Greek as Εἰς ἀρχὰς τῆς ἡμέρας (eis archas tēs hēmeras), meaning "into the powers of the day"; and for the lesser light, εἰς ἀρχὰς τῆς νυκτός (eis archas tēs nyktos), meaning "into the powers of the night." However, since ἀρχή in Greek signifies not only rule and dominion but also the beginning of time, many Greeks understood the luminaries as being created for the beginning of day and night; they took ἀρχή not as power but as beginning. Hence, they assert that the moon, being said to have been made at the beginning of the

night, was diametrically opposite the sun when it was created. At the start of the night, the moon rises only as a full moon, πανσέληνος (panselēnos), meaning complete and round, which appears full to us when it is directly opposite the sun. Therefore, when both luminaries were made in the morning, the sun began to shine from the east: and when it reached the sign of the west at evening, then the moon began to appear in the east at the start of the night.

However, although this could indeed have been and is believed to have been the case, it is not derived from this passage; for here ἀρχή does not mean beginning but power, a dual meaning not present in the Hebrew context. Thus, our reading is better as: "To govern the day and the night." Therefore, St. Augustine, in his book *De Genesi ad Litteram Imperfecto*, criticizes the interpretation that considers the moon's phase starting not from the new moon but from the full moon, arguing instead that it was made to have dominion or power.

Rabbi Aben Ezra explains this passage by noting that the two great luminaries are referred to as "great" in relation to the other stars. This is analogous to how the three sons of Jesse are called great in comparison to those who followed, and Eliab the firstborn is considered great among all his brothers; it is not that one is absolutely greater than the other. The phrase יֵשׁ לוֹ סוֹד (yes lo sod) means "he has a secret" or "there is a secret to it." Regarding "in the power of the day": the sun governs the day and not the night, because the night has no light; likewise, the light of the moon and stars is not seen during the day. If one asks, haven't the wise scholars or astrologers said that the planet Jupiter, צֶדֶק (Tzedek), and all stars, except for the planet referred to as מַכְכַּב (Mercury) and Venus, are larger than the moon? And how then is it written that the luminaries are "great"? The answer is that "great" does not refer to their physical size but to their light, and the moon's light is much more noticeable because it is closer to the Earth, which is why it is written as "luminaries," and he placed or gave them. One should not

wonder about the use of the word וַיִּתֵּן (vayiten), "and he gave," because it is written similarly as "My bow I have set." And concerning "in the power": the day is defined from the time of the sun's rise until its setting, and the night from the time the stars are visible; and rightly or justly it is said: "At the mouth of three witnesses." Know that the time of solar eclipse is from evening until about one and a third hours, because it appears like there is light in the clouds; and so in the morning is the first light of the sun's rise, and at the rising of the sun's light during the day, and the moon's light at night, they divide between light and darkness. This is Aben Ezra's commentary up to this point.

Rabbi Solomon, however, holds a different view about the great luminaries. He believes that "the great luminaries were created equal; but the moon was diminished because it complained, or accused, saying it was impossible for two rulers to serve in one crown; and [He created] the stars: because He diminished the moon, He multiplied its host to fulfill or complete its purpose." This reflects a narrative from Jewish tradition about the moon's size being reduced due to its complaint about sharing equal brightness with the sun, which led to an increase in the number of stars to compensate for the moon's diminished light.

In our exposition of this passage, we say that the sun and the moon are called the great luminaries, not only because they are bodies of immense magnitude, and because they shine brighter than the other stars, but primarily according to appearance, since they appear larger than the others. Although the lunar body is far smaller than almost all other stars, because it is closer to Earth, it appears larger and has a greater influence; hence, after the sun, it surpasses the other celestial bodies in influence. They are said to be placed in the firmament of heaven, because these stars are the denser parts of their respective orbits. Here, the firmament is not understood as the air, as Aben Ezra suggests — that according to appearance alone, the

luminaries are said to be placed in the firmament, i.e., the air, because that is where they are seen; but the firmament here is understood as the heaven divided into eight parts, i.e., the eighth sphere with the orbits of the planets, as we understand with Rabbi Sepharaddi.

Furthermore, we do not agree with what Rabbi Solomon says, that the sun and moon were equal in brightness at their creation, and that the moon spoke to God asking for the sun's light to be diminished, and thus its own light was reduced. For the celestial bodies are not rational, sentient beings capable of speech, such as the moon could have been; nor would there have been any night before the fourth day, but continual day if, with the sun illuminating the day and the moon the night, their light was equal in clarity and brightness; indeed, night would not be night if it were as bright as day. But the moon is called a great luminary because, after the sun, it appears so among the stars; and it is called the lesser luminary in relation to the sun, which far surpasses it in body size, brightness of light, and power of influence. And because the sun illuminates the day and the moon the night, and at no time does the sun illuminate the night or the moon the day, therefore the greater luminary is said to govern the day, to preside over the day, and the lesser luminary is made to govern the night.

Many believe that what Rabbi Solomon says pertains to a deeper theology and should not be taken literally; thus, it is thought to symbolically represent some hidden truth.

Verse 19 And God saw that it was good. And it was evening and it was morning, the fourth day. God saw that what had been made, which pleased to be made, had been made to please to remain. And He saw that it was good because the utility of the luminaries and stars that had been made is wonderful: they are for signs, for seasons, for days, and years; they shine upon the earth, they rule,

govern, influence, produce life, and provide for all living beings and accomplish countless other good things for the benefit and convenience of the living.

Verse 20 And God said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that has life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

Hebrew: יִשְׂרָצוּ (yishr'tsú)

There is hardly a word in Latin that corresponds to this Hebrew word. שָׂרָץ (sharatz) means to produce abundantly, and it is used for those things that come forth in great numbers and move about. However, our Translator, following the Septuagint, who translated it as: Ἐξαγαγέτω τὰ ὕδατα ἑρπετά, that is: Let the waters bring forth reptiles, has himself translated it as: Let the waters bring forth reptiles. Although 'reptile' refers to terrestrial creatures that crawl, the term is also applied to fish; for fish move through the water in much the same way that reptiles crawl on land.

Rabbi Aben Ezra says that שָׂרָץ (sharatz) is a transitive verb, like in the phrase: The river will bring forth, or produce frogs, and the meaning of יִשְׂרָצוּ (yishretzu) is generation with elevation. And it is written: Fowl that may fly above the face of the firmament, for: up to the boundary of the firmament. And Gaon says that עַל־פְּנֵי (al-panei) is עַם פְּנֵי (im-panei); if so, the face of the heaven is below it; יַעֲוֹפֶה (ya'ofef), the פ' (peh) is doubled, like in יִכּוֹנֵן (yikonan), where נ' (nun) is doubled."

Rabbi Solomon says that "a living soul is that which has life; and concerning שָׂרָץ (sharatz), every living thing that is not high above the ground is called שָׂרָץ, in birds, such as flies; in creeping things, such as ants, black worms, or beetles, and worms; and in בְּרִיּוֹת (beriyot), such as weasels, mice, slugs, or turtles, and what comes out similar to them, and all fishes."

We indeed explain this place as follows: Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, or let them be swarming with living creatures, if we translate "reperere" as pertaining to things that move in the waters, that is, let them produce aquatic animals in great abundance and multitude. It is, however, noteworthy that the waters are not commanded to produce reptiles by making them arise from themselves, but they received the power through this command of God, that fish may be generated from them. And not from the waters alone; for all the elements together provide nature to the animals, and they partake more from the earth; but since fish live in the waters and are contained there, thus aquatic animals are said to be so, as if they draw their origin from the waters. And soon, by the divine command, the waters were filled with fish and, after the earth and sky, received their own unique and distinctive adornment.

However, it raises the question of how birds can come from the waters, since they are not aquatic animals but rather belong to the air, as they are observed to live in the air. This issue arises according to the Vulgate Edition. This doubt is resolved by the Hebrew Truth, which states: וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֶה עַל־הָאָרֶץ (v'of y'ofef al-ha'aretz): "And let birds fly above the earth." Therefore, birds are not mixed among those that are produced from the waters; but where these events are described, they occur above the earth; for later, birds are also counted among the land animals. For it says: Thus having formed ... from the ground all the land animals and all the birds of the sky, etc.; unless perhaps we say, according to our Edition, that birds are said to come from the waters because in the waters there is not only liquid from which fish derive their origin but also vapor, which agrees with the airy nature in a certain way and from this vapor, as if airy, birds derived their origin. When it is added: Under the firmament of heaven, or, according to the Hebrew reading, over the face of the firmament of heaven: by the face of the firmament, we understand the air; by the firmament, however, from the starry sky to

all the spheres up to the air; and the face of this heaven is air, which is also often called sky. Thus birds of the sky are mentioned. And so the air also received its own adornment of birds.

Verse 21: And God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

The Hebrew text reads: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה (Va-yivra Elohim et-ha-tanninim ha-gdolim v'et kol-nefesh ha-chayah ha-romeset, asher shar'tzu ha-mayim l'mineihem, v'et kol-of kanaf l'minehu): And God created the great sea monsters and every living soul, the creeping thing that the waters have swarmed or swarming creature, according to its kind, and every bird of wing according to its kind.

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra comments that הרמשת (ha-romeset) "has the sense of הולכת" (moving); and there are those who say that ש (sh) is in place of ס (s). Rabbi Solomon says that התנינים (ha-tanninim) are large fish that are in the sea. And in the words of the story, there is Leviathan and the son of his mate: because He created them male and female, and killed the female and saved her for the righteous of the future age; for if she had been fruitful and multiplied, the world would not have stood in their presence. The phrase 'living soul' clarifies as a soul in which there is life.

We thus explain. Our translator has rendered הַתַּנִּינִם (ha-tanninim) as "cete" (sea monsters), following the Septuagint, which translated it as: Καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ κήτη τὰ μέγала, that is, "And God made the great sea creatures," transferring the sense rather than the word. For in this context, that word should be understood not as referring to terrestrial, but to marine and aquatic serpents; for in the waters, "cete" and the greatest fish are nothing other than what dragons are on land. Hence elsewhere we read that great fish are called dragons,

as in the Psalm: "Dragons and all depths," understanding by "depths" the most abundant waters, and by "dragons" the largest fish. Nor does "cete" refer to a single species of these fish, but all larger fish are thus called, as Theodoret says. However, the account that Rabbi Solomon gives about such fish is utterly absurd if taken literally; but it is said to be a parable, according to deeper theological interpretations. Concerning which, nothing at present.

Verses 22-23: And God saw that it was good, and He blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

Our translator has rendered it as "Crescite" (Grow), following the Septuagint, which translated ἀὐξάνεσθε as "grow"; in Hebrew, it is פָּרוּ (p'ru), which means "be fruitful," from the word פֶּרִי (peri), meaning fruit. However, the sense is the same; for what is to bear fruit in trees is to grow in animals. Regarding "Fill the waters of the seas": the water in the seas is from the source, just as the Septuagint translated Ὑδατα ἐν ταῖς θαλάσσαις (Hydata en tais thalassais), meaning "waters in the seas"; since the meaning does not differ, our translator rendered it as "waters of the seas."

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra comments that "grow and multiply" should be understood as "you shall grow and multiply," similar to "Die on the mountain," meaning "you shall die," because this is not within their power or control; he also states that "every living creature" refers to everything that fire, water, and earth produce, including humans; and that "cattle" are those animals that are with human offspring for their needs, for riding and eating; and "creeping things" are small animals that walk on the earth; and "beasts of the earth" are those that are in the fields where there is no dwelling; and that in the phrase וַחַיְתָּה (v'chaytoh), the final ו (vav) is redundant, similar to לְמַעַן מַיִם (l'ma'yano mayim), "into water springs."

Rabbi Solomon links this blessing to multiplication, "because they diminish them, namely humans, and scare them off, or they fish and eat them; therefore, it was necessary to bless them. And it was also necessary to bless the beasts; but because of the serpent, which was to be a curse, therefore the animals were not blessed, lest it too be included in the gathering." He also notes that פָּרוּ (p'ru) means "produce fruit and multiply."

We also understand that this blessing primarily consists in that power and inclination, which God has bestowed upon them for breeding, to preserve their species. Therefore, this blessing is a direction from God's unerring intellect and order towards their generation and multiplication.

Verses 24-25: And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. And God made the beasts ... according to their kinds, and the livestock, and every creeping thing of its kind.

The phrase "let bring forth" in Hebrew is תּוֹצֵא (toze), which means "let bring forth" or "let produce"; from which Rabbi Solomon says, "This is what I have explained, that all were created on the first day, and it was only necessary to bring them forth, or make them come out." "Living creature" is explained as that in which there is life; and "creeping thing" is רֶמֶשׂ (remes), he says that "these are the reptiles, which are low and crawl on the earth, and seem as if dragging themselves, whose movement is not readily seen. Every meaning of רֶמֶשׂ is שְׂרָץ (sheretz, swarming)."

We explain this place thus: "Let bring forth," that is, let it receive the power of producing, with the other elements also contributing to the material principle. Immediately the earth produced what had been commanded by God as both the commander and by its efficient power, and thus obtained its ornament of terrestrial animals, namely,

livestock, creeping things: and beasts, which are called terrestrial animals, not because they consist only of that element, but also from all; yet, because they derive their origin therefrom, live there, dwell, feed, and are contained there, and the element of earth predominates in them, therefore they are called terrestrial. However, here the kinds of these animals are expressed: livestock, reptiles, and beasts of the earth. By the term "livestock," animals that are of use to humans are designated, so called as if aiding human uses. Under this name, cattle are also included. By the term "creeping thing," all animals are meant that move not by thrust but by dragging, which either are entirely lacking legs, or have very short ones, so they cannot raise themselves off the ground when walking, but are low-bodied and depressed. Finally, those animals that are moved by impulse and progressive motion yet are always untamed and ferocious, not naturally knowing how to become tame, but living and staying in vast forests and raging with claws and mouth, are expressed by the term "beasts."

Verse 26: And God saw that it was good, and said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that moves upon the earth."

The Hebrew text states: נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ (Na'aseh adam b'tzalmenu kidmutenu), "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness."

The Septuagint, however, changed the preposition to πρός, translated as "towards" or "as for," just as our translator has followed them. Nonetheless, it makes no difference in meaning.

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra, regarding the exposition of this passage, says that "there are those who say that the word נַעֲשֶׂה (na'aseh) is a Niphal form verb, as is everything that was made on the first day;

and they say that 'in our image and our likeness' are the words of Moses." His own exposition is that "God created man בצלמו (b'tzalmo), in His image, because ו (vav) turns to man; and they explain 'in the image of God' as God joined with 'He made', as if to say that God made man in His image. And this explanation is of the faint-hearted, because it would have been more evident to say: and God said: let man be made; and thus He made him in His image. Moreover, how does the ו (vav) in בצלמו (b'tzalmo) refer back to man? Behold, he has an image before he exists. And what is the reason that, for shedding man's blood in man, his own blood is shed, because man was created in the image? Even all living souls have an image."

And Gaon says the exposition is: in our image, according to our likeness; and its sense is: in the image, which is seen in wisdom; for it is good, and for the honor of man and his connection to God. And thus from his earth they emerged, because the earth is the Lord's and its fullness. And he says regarding the word נעשה (na'aseh), if it is plural, [this is] in the manner of speaking of kings, and as in: 'And we will also give you this; We will say before the king; If perhaps I can, we will strike him.' And these testimonies are false testimonies, for ונתנה (venatnah) is a Niphal conjugation and is like: 'And the city is due,' etc.; and ו (vav) is a conversive of the future, according to the rule of every past tense verb; and the sense is: and it will be given to you; and that 'We will strike him': he and his army; or it is a Hophal form, as in: לא אנקך ונקא; and also because we find לא נכו, for there is no conjugation whose Hophal form is not mentioned, because it is severe," namely the conjugation. "And Moses the Spanish priest erred in his book in the word: 'We will say before the king,' which is Chaldean: and how will Daniel speak in a great language before Nebuchadnezzar, who was king of kings? And now I will explain. Know that all the works of Genesis were created for the honor of man by the command of God, and all the sprouts that

the earth produced, and the waters and all souls and beasts: and then God said to the angels: Let us make man! We will give our work to him, and not the waters, nor the earth; and after we know that the law speaks according to the language of the sons of men, for the speaker is a man also hearing, and a man cannot speak words higher than himself, nor lower, but along the way of man's likeness, and thus it is said: mouth of the earth, hands of the Jordan, and head of the dust of the globe. And far, far be it that there be any likeness to God! And because man is elevated above those that are not man, he is appointed over the beasts of the earth for God; and because there is no body, but the fullness of all and the body of man is, let there be a small world – blessed be God – who began in the great and ended in the small. And thus says the Prophet, who saw the glory of God like the vision of a man; and God is one and is the maker of all and is all." All this by Aben Ezra.

Rabbi Solomon also feels similarly, and these are his comments. He says: "Let us make man: this teaches us the humility of God, because man is in the likeness of angels, and they would have envied him: therefore, He consulted them; and because it is the judgment of the angels, He consulted His family. Just as we find in Ahab, where Micaiah said to him: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left. And how can there be right and left in His presence? But these are on the right, who are for justification, and those on the left, who are for condemnation; just as in the judgments of the cities the opinion and in the speech of the Saints the petition. Thus, in His family He took permission, saying to them: There is in the upper realms my likeness: if it is not in the lower ones, behold, envy in the works of creation: Let us make man. Although they did not assist Him in his formation, Scripture does not cease to teach the way of the earth and the example of humility, that if one is great he should consult and seek permission from the small. And if it were written: I

will make man: it would not teach us that there is speech with the council house, but with Himself. But it writes afterwards: And God created man, and not: they created, בצלמו (b'tzalmo), in His image, that is in the exemplar, type, or form, which is ours, according to our likeness, for understanding, or with mind and intellect, and for foresight."

These are the expositions that the aforementioned Hebrew scholars bring forth regarding this passage, which must be refuted, especially the later ones; for the earlier ones, as false, they themselves reject. Let us pay attention to the letter and we will see all the fabrications of the Hebrews collapse.

This is the letter: "Let us make man in our image and likeness," as we have seen from Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra and Rabbi Solomon; let us now establish some points, according to the Hebrews. First: angels are not creators, hence they assert that they were created on the second day, lest we should think that they were God's co-operators in the creation of the world. Second: the image and likeness should be understood not according to the body, but according to the soul, mind, and intellect of man, as Rabbi Solomon asserts here and Rabbi Moses in his "Guide for the Perplexed." Then I say: how does God address the angels, saying, "Let us make," if angels are not God's co-operators in creation? You will not say according to the body: for not the body, but the soul is made in the image and likeness of God, which is created by God instantly, according to that passage: "Who forms the spirit within him." Furthermore, is the image and likeness of God and the angels one and the same, that God would say, "In our image and likeness"? Moreover, was man created in the image and likeness of the angels, and not rather were the angels created in the same image to which man himself was created? And why did it not subsequently state: "And the gods created man in the image," etc., as "And God

created," if the angels together with God created man himself? For the operation of God and the angels is not one.

Rabbi Solomon says that the angels did not cooperate with God in the creation of man, hence it is said: "And God created man."

However, by using the words "Let us make," etc., God addressed the angels, seeking their counsel as He prepared to create man in His own image and likeness; so that just as the likeness of God is in the higher beings, so it would be in the lower ones, lest the lower ones envy the higher. Yet I still ask: why does it say, "In our image and likeness," when man was created in the likeness of God, not of the angels? For, as he himself says, the likeness of God was already in the higher beings, that is, in the angels, who have the likeness of God. Then is God unwise to seek counsel from another? Seeking counsel is not characteristic of one supremely wise and knowing all, but of one who does not know what is better or more advantageous.

But he says that God did this to teach us humility. But whom was He teaching if man had not yet been created but was only being planned by God? Would it not have been a much greater, clearer, and more evident example of humility if God had sometimes consulted men when He had proposed to do something? Certainly, Moses was God's most faithful servant and friend, who often consulted God in his actions. However, we never read that God consulted him in order to accomplish something.

The example that he brings does not prove his point. For Micaiah saw the Lord in some likeness representing God, whether formed externally or internally in the imagination of the Prophet. But the host of angels, whom he saw standing around Him, were not all good angels; and those who justify God's judgment are said to be on His right, while those who condemn are on His left. However, those on the right are the good ones; those on the left are the evil ones who are said to assist God, because they are often the executors of divine

justice. And in the Book of Job, we read that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came among them. And indeed, that spirit who said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets," although justifying God's question, "Who will deceive Ahab?" etc., should have been placed on the right side of God, even though he was a wicked spirit. But what is more absurd than to place the most wicked spirits on the right side of God? Nor did God approve of that lie when He said, "Go and you will be successful," as He is the first and highest truth, but He certainly allowed it. For by just judgment, God permits evil men to be deceived by demons, who, however, can do nothing unless they are allowed to act.

It therefore remains for us to present the true and Catholic understanding of what is meant by "Let us make man." Here, as the holiest and most learned interpreters assert, the plurality of the Divine Persons is indicated, and it is a discourse of the Father to the Son and the Holy Spirit; since the operation of all the Divine Persons is one and undivided in external works. Thus, the Father says to the Son: "Let us make," and not "Let it be made," as we have seen said in the creation of the preceding things. For all those things were made from the original matter and their forms were also derived from its power and virtue. But when it comes to man, He does not say, "Let the earth bring forth," but rather, "Let us make." For although the body of man too is made from that primary matter, his soul, which is the noblest of forms, is not derived from it, but is created by God by its own nature; and since man is man insofar as he is endowed with a rational soul and thrives with sense and reason, it is therefore said: "Let us make man."

Man, in Hebrew, is called אָדָם (Adam), from אֲדָמָה (adama), meaning earth, or from אָדוֹם (adom), meaning red, because he was made from red earth, as Josephus believed: asserting that man was formed in the Damascus region and the earth from which he was formed turned

out to be red. However, the Sacred Scriptures teach that Adam is called so from אָדָמָה (adama). If the Latin word for man, "homo," is derived from "humus" (soil), this aligns with the Hebrew etymology. Therefore, the most accurate and fitting etymology of man is that he is called from the earth. Just as the human body is drawn and made from the earth, so too it is fitting that the name of man should be derived from it.

Indeed, although man is earthly by body and thus named as if from the earth, his soul originates from the highest God and is celestial. Since man consists of both soul and body, united together, due to this conjunction of two natures, there are two principal names used to describe him in the major languages. In the Hebrew language, man is not only called אָדָם (Adam) but also אִישׁ (ish), just as in Latin he is not only "homo," which corresponds to אָדָם in Hebrew, but also "vir," which corresponds to אִישׁ; "vir" implies the strength of spirit and vigor of reason. However, אֲנוּשׁ (enosh) is also used in Hebrew after the fall, signifying something lamentable and calamitous, due to the misery and penalties incurred by sin.

In the Greek language, similarly, he is called βροτός, meaning earthly and mortal, in respect to the body; ἀνὴρ, meaning man, in respect to the mind; and in consideration of both, he is called ἄνθρωπος from ἄνω (upwards) and ρέπων (leaning or looking), as if inclining or looking upwards, as though he has something from the earth, for which reason he remains there, and something from heaven, towards which he looks and aspires; or as Socrates says in Plato's Cratylus, he might be called ἀναθρῶν ἃ ὄπωπε, meaning considering what he has seen. For it is characteristic of man to contemplate the invisible things from the visible, that is, from the senses, through which he is earthly and sees earthly things, to take these and from there elevate himself again to the knowledge of the invisible through the intellect.

It is also important to note that the name "Adam" is not exclusive to the first man, but encompasses the whole human species and both sexes; similar to "homo" in Latin and ἄνθρωπος in Greek. Scripture says that, on the day God created man, He made him in the image of God; He created them male and female, blessed them, and called their name Adam. However, that first man was always called by this name, due to a certain preeminence and excellence.

Indeed, he himself was the origin of the entire human race, and in him, the whole of human nature was virtually contained in the seed, from which the entire human race was propagated. Therefore, St. Augustine, considering such a name as that man's own, following St. Cyprian, said that he was so named because the earth from which that man was formed was taken from the four parts of the world, which are expressed in the four letters of his name in Greek: Α, Ἀνατολή (east); Δ, Δύσις (west); Α, Ἄρκτος (north); Μ, Μεσημβρία (south). However, this is not clearly established in the Hebrew language; yet, it does no harm to believe it, even if it may not be true.

Returning to our matter, we say that when the Lord said: "Let us make man": He meant the first man, and in him, the whole nature of humanity, as if we were all already contained in him, from whom we were later to be propagated. He did not simply say: "Let us make man," but added: "In our image and likeness." Hence, we must consider how man is said to be created in the image and likeness of God.

Here, some have thought, far astray, that our soul is of the substance of God, and therefore it is said to be made in the image and likeness of God, since the primary and principal likeness is in the same nature. But this notion is foolish. Indeed, the substance of God was not made, nor does God suffer anything outside Himself to have a likeness in the same nature. For it is written: "To whom... have you

likened Him?" And elsewhere: "Lord, who is like You?" And: "There is none like You among the gods, O Lord." For this is utterly unattainable.

Let us suppose, then, that this likeness is according to nature. I ask: according to what nature? Generic, specific, or individual? Since God is outside and above all categories, being an infinite substance and devoid of all composition, as the simplest and purest act, we cannot be like Him according to genus, species, or individual; rather, this likeness must be understood analogically.

However, in contrast to this interpretation, there was the madness of the Anthropomorphites, who believed that God has a body and a soul, just like us; and therefore, they assert that man was made in the image and likeness of God, not only according to the soul but also according to the body. But this too is utterly absurd and ridiculous according to true theology; for God is Spirit, and cannot be circumscribed or defined by any physical lines or figures.

All the Holy Doctors assert that this image and likeness of God in man must be understood not according to the body, but according to the mind, by which man naturally excels the irrational creatures. Insinuating this, Scripture immediately adds: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the beasts and all the earth." This dominion reflects man's unique rational capacities, which mirror divine wisdom and governance, rather than any physical resemblance to God.

Scholastic theologians carefully consider three concepts regarding the reflection of God in creation: the vestige, the likeness, and the image. Starting with the vestige: for example, if someone were to press their foot into the ground, they leave a footprint, which can be recognized as an indication that a person has passed by and left that mark. However, this footprint would not be called an image or likeness of the person. Similarly, all creatures, inasmuch as they are

created and partake in being, carry a sort of vestige of God within themselves: they indicate that God has produced them. Insofar as all things partake in being, they bear a certain vestige of the Father, who is the principle, source, and origin of all existence; thus, whatever a thing or person is, it is from Him. Moreover, inasmuch as every creature displays its own species and beauty, as if having been made in advance, it represents a vestige of the Son, who is the art of the Supreme Father, through whom all things were made, and the full rationale of all living reasons. Furthermore, since in every thing there is a certain inclination or natural desire by which it moves either towards acquiring its own perfection or sharing itself with another—indeed, every good by its nature is communicative and diffusive—it bears a vestige of the Holy Spirit, who is the common love of the Father and the Son proceeding from them, by which they love themselves and the creatures, and also spread themselves into the creatures.

However, such vestiges do not carry in themselves the likeness of the divine nature. Since irrational creatures are devoid of reason and intellect, although they signify the highest intellect, being directed by an unerring intellect, they cannot represent its likeness; just as smoke indicates fire, but does not represent the form of fire.

Therefore, only intellectual nature bears a kind of likeness to God, insofar as it is intellectual, free in will, and self-empowered; these conditions are in God in a supreme and eminent way by His very nature.

Thus, man, insofar as he represents God in the world, is said to be made in the likeness of God according to the soul. Just as God knows all things, so man by his nature is capable of knowing all; as God is free in action, so is man; as God is unique in the world, so the soul is unique in the body; as God moves all things in the world while remaining unmoved Himself, so the soul moves the entire body while remaining unmoved itself; as God is immortal in the

world, so is the soul in the body; as God does not sleep in the world, neither does the soul in the body; as God governs the world, so does the soul govern the body; and just as God does not need food or drink in the world, nor does He partake of food or drink, so neither does the soul in the body; as God is wholly present throughout the whole world and entirely in each of its parts, so is the soul in the body; as God sees all and is not seen in the world, so is the soul in the body; as God, though He is in every place, is not defiled by the dirt of places, so is the soul in the body; as God fills the whole world, so does the soul fill the entire body; as God, although He is everywhere by power, essence, and presence, works differently in different parts of the world, so does the soul in the body; and just as God's operations are more perfectly perceived in the blessed place and heaven, where God is said to especially be, dwell, and reign, so is the soul in the head and heart; and just as God dominates all things, so does man dominate according to mind and reason, as it is said here: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the beasts and all the earth."

However, the perfect image of God does not consist merely in these attributes; for although our soul is very similar to God in the attributes described, this similarity is considered accidental, as it concerns the accidents of the soul. The image, however, is established in the very substance of the soul and its natural powers, specifically memory, intelligence, and will: and in these, the image of God, in which man was made, must necessarily consist. Just as God is one, but in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—so our soul, one in substance, consists in these three powers; in memory, the image of the Father shines forth, for memory, fruitful with the act of speaking, produces the word; in intelligence, the image of the Son is expressed, because the Son is begotten in the manner of intellect and nature, hence the Son in the divine is the begotten knowledge, by which the Father knows Himself and by

knowing, produces another self, that is, the Son; in will, the image of the Holy Spirit is intimated, because the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of the will from the Father and the Son, as from a single principle. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is nothing but the love with which the Father and the Son love each other; and just as the Son is begotten by the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both, so intelligence arises from memory, taking intelligence both as potential and as act, and will arises from both, that is, from memory and intelligence, taking will both as the power itself and as the act. Indeed, the image of the Divine Trinity, as especially pleasing to later theologians, does not consist solely in the soul's primary acts, but in both the primary and secondary acts taken together. Thus, not only is the distinction, origin, and procession of the divine Persons, as mentioned, brilliantly reflected, but also their identity and the unity of the divine essence is expressly represented.

Sanctus Augustinus, after establishing one image, assigns another to the triad of mind, knowledge or word, and love; these also aptly express both the production and distinction of the Divine Persons. For the mind begets the word, and with the word subsequently produces love; thus, the mind represents the Father, the word the Son, and love the Holy Spirit, perfectly reflecting their relationship; yet the unity of essence is preserved, since all these are aspects of a single soul. Although these truths are profound, the intellect still cannot rest because it is said that man was made in the image and likeness of God, as if some prior image existed after which man was formed.

Therefore, when the Hebrew Truth states: **נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ** ("Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"), and the Targum translates this as: **נַעֲבִיד אִנְשָׁא בְּצַלְמֵנָא כִּדְמוּתֵנָא** ("Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"), we can understand "image" and "likeness" according to this text as meaning: "Let us imprint our image on human nature, so that it may be a representation of our divinity and

reflect our nature." Just as a coin bears the stamped image of a king or prince, as in the question, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?" where the figure and image of Caesar are formed in wood, stone, or bronze, making it a likeness of him: so too in us, the image of God is a certain expressed likeness and representation of God.

And in this manner, all that has been previously discussed is encapsulated in these words; especially that aspect in which God is represented as presiding and dominating over all things, while man himself is set by nature to preside over and be established above his inferiors. Therefore, it immediately follows: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and the beasts and all the earth." In the original it is written: וַיִּרְדּוּ ("and let them have dominion"), which includes both sexes, encompassing all humanity; for such is the dignity of nature.

Rabbi Solomon notes that it is said so, "because in this language there is רִידוּי (ridui), meaning descent, and יְרִידָה (yeridah), meaning presidency or dominion: as if, should he merit, or should the world have been worthy, man would dominate over the beasts and the livestock; if he did not merit, he would descend into affliction, and the beasts would dominate over him."

However, we maintain that such dominion is natural to man. Man is by nature more excellent, nobler, and more perfect. The less perfect are always directed and ordered towards the more perfect, as towards an end, and are subservient to them: the earth serves the plants, the plants the animals, and all these things serve man; whose governance man, adorned with the prudence of the mind, the perspicacity of reason, and the most sacred image of God, can most conveniently exercise and dominate over the rest. And although, by the merit of that first fault, the origin of all subsequent ones, man is actually deprived of dominion over many animals which savage him

and lie in wait for his life, he has nevertheless never lost the right to dominate all. For even if many escape his dominion in fact, man is always by nature such that he has the right over them, and sometimes actually subjects them to his power; as St. James says in his Epistle: "For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind."

Verse 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Rabbi Solomon explains that בצלמו (betzelmo), "in the type, or form He made him; for all things were created by the word of God, and he was created by hands, as it is said: 'You formed me and laid your hand upon me'". I think he speaks here in parables; otherwise, it is absurd and laughable what he says. "He was made: בהותם (behotam), in the seal, like a coin, which is made by an impression, which is called a die: קוניי (koniyo); and he was saying: let it be turned, like the material of the seal. In the image of God He created him: I explain to you that He formed him with a prepared image of a likeness; He formed him, male and female He created them.

Moreover, above or below, it says: 'And He took one of his ribs, etc. And in the Midrash Aggada: that He created him with a double face in the first creation, and afterwards divided and spread the cover, so that it is not recognized that they were both created at once. And I will not explain to you how He formed the creatures, and I will explain elsewhere". Rabbi Aben Ezra does not approve; for he says here: "And I cannot explain that Adam was created at first with two faces, and they are one, and also two; and behold, in the image of God he was created: מלאד (melad), and he himself was created male and female".

However, we explain this passage, in no way deviating from the paths of the most holy men, as follows: In the image of God He created him. It is clear from this that angels did not create man, but

God did: "And God created man, and in the image of God He created him." But if God created, in whose image did He create? St. Augustine thinks it is said as in His own image; Origen, St. Hilary, Cyril, Theodoret, and St. Jerome also, on Ezekiel, and the Glossa Ordinaria in the same place, assert that this refers to Christ, who is God, in whose image man was specifically created: so that God formed man in that image which the Lord had created in His predestination, as it is written: "From the beginning and before the ages I was created," and Christ Himself was the archetype of human nature, which was described in the likeness of that true image of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God.

Note here, for the understanding of this passage, that Christ was the first predestined in the divine mind, as it is said: "In the head of the book it is written of me;" therefore, He is called the firstborn of all creation. He is predestined, not according to the divine nature, but the human, which is why the form that the Word would assume was first conceived in the divine mind; and in the image and likeness of that form, God created the first man. Therefore, it is said that God created him in the image of God, namely the incarnate, that is Christ, who is God.

Therefore, God created man in the image of God Christ: that is, in the form and likeness predestined for Christ the Son of God, before the formation of all creatures, who is called the firstborn of all creation, in whom all things were created. Thus, according to that image preformed in the divine mind, to be assumed by the Word, man himself, the most noble creature of the world, was formed and brought forth. I confess, this exposition is very appealing. It seems to express in a most fitting and marvelous way the profound and perfect understanding concerning the whole of man, both in body and in mind; so that Christ himself is the archetype to which we are primarily to be expressed, both according to the body and according to the soul and mind, as we are to be conformed to him in eternal

blessedness. This was clearly expressed by the Apostle, saying: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son"; and elsewhere: "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Therefore, he who was created in the image of Christ is truly said to have been created in the image of God, since in Christ dwells... the fullness of Divinity bodily.

"Male and female He created them." The manner of speaking here is to be considered. For he first said: "He created him"; but now: "He created them." It is utterly to be rejected, the notion some Hebrews claim from this, that male and female were created and joined as one at the side, but were later separated from each other. This is also rejected by more recent Hebrew scholars, as we have already seen in their explanations. And if it is so, what, pray, is that which is later said: "He took one of his ribs and built it... into a woman... and filled in flesh in its place"? But if you will say that it should be understood according to the Hebrew Text: "He took one from his side and filled in flesh in its place": setting aside that the word צֵלַע (tzela) primarily signifies a rib; how did he build that side into a woman, if the woman was already built into the side of the man from the beginning? Or how was Adam not found similar, if a woman very much like him was next to him? Or how did Adam say: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: and she shall be called אִשָּׁה (isha): woman, because she was taken out of man"? For the woman is not said to be taken more from the man's side than the man is said to be taken from the side of the woman. I also set aside that God should not have begun human nature with a monstrous work; for such are monsters.

We thus explain this passage as follows. "Male and female He created them": because in Adam the woman also was created; not that she was already actually formed, but because, already decreed in the mind of God, she was soon to be created. Although we can

rightly say that the woman was truly created simultaneously, since she was in some way contained in the man already created, from whose flesh and bones she was to be produced. Therefore, we can explain this with St. Basil, so that what is said refers to the image of God. For when it was said: "In the image of God He created him," lest we should think that only the man was formed in the image and likeness of God, it immediately added: "Male and female He created them." Indeed, the woman also is created in the image of God according to the mind, and similarly in Christ; for in Him, as the Apostle says, there is neither male nor female, that is, this distinction does not exist, so that the male would be accepted and the female rejected: for she too is in the image of God. Nor do I deny that it can be said here, that Moses by anticipation placed the formation of the woman, about to explain soon the divine blessing on the multiplying and increasing human race; and this was to happen through the union of male and female; and therefore, anticipating the formation of the woman, he mentions her soon to be formed, later to explain the order of formation.

And God blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and all living things that move on the earth."

The Hebrew text reads: "Be fruitful and multiply"; the sense is the same, as we have said above. And subdue it: וַיִּכְבְּשֶׁהָ.

Rabbi Solomon says that "the ו (vav) is missing, to teach that the man subdues the woman, and that she should not go out; and further to teach that it is the man who is directed to subdue under the command regarding fruitfulness and multiplication, and not the woman."

Rabbi Aben Ezra says that "the phrase: פֶּרּוּ וּרְבוּ: 'be fruitful and multiply', cannot be explained as a blessing in man, as in the creatures of the waters: but it is a commandment, which the ancients

translated—ברך, their memory in blessing—and placed this verse as a memorial to be said."

We explain this passage as follows. And God blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply." This blessing primarily consists in the granting of power to propagate, so that the human species might multiply in number of individuals, lest the first and most noble of species should fail. For, even if man had not sinned, it could have been possible for that species to continue perpetually in those first human individuals created; and although God created them eternal, though by nature mortal, so that they could have lived without dying, the power to propagate would not have been necessary for the preservation of the species; yet propagation would have been for the glory of God, so that this nature might be shared with many chosen by God for grace and glory. Hence, those first humans were blessed by God and endowed from the beginning of their formation with an abundance of gifts, in the best of all goods, both natural and of grace: and they were to propagate, and those who were born from them would receive the blessing of such gifts and would be participants of the same blessings, had no sin intervened.

In this place, it is noteworthy that marriage was made a sacrament, for it was blessed by God; thus, we understand subsequently that grace was given for producing offspring fittingly for God, so that those who came from it might emerge sanctified. But after the fall of man, the power to propagate became absolutely necessary, lest the human species entirely fail, as through sin man incurred the necessity of dying.

I do not deny that this blessing can also be understood as an outpouring of original justice and grace, the granting of all virtues, both moral and cardinal, as well as theological, and also the forgiving of any other gratuitous gifts with which the first humans were most richly endowed and adorned by the most benevolent God.

However, as we have already mentioned at the beginning, it primarily consists in the granting of procreative power, due to what follows: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." Indeed, the earth was to be filled with people propagated, to whom it is said, to subdue it by cultivating it and demanding its fruits as though owed.

Hebrews from this passage criticize those among Christians who for the sake of the kingdom of heaven have castrated themselves leading a celibate life, asserting that they violate the divine commandment, since these words prescribe marriage to man; and heretics rejoice greatly from this passage to their own destruction, disparaging monastics. But indeed, they vainly object to this place; because in these words: "Be fruitful and multiply," there is either no commandment, but merely the allowance of capacity and a blessing in approving that work; or if it is a commandment, which I do not deny to confess, it is a commandment for a time, from the beginning, when the earth was empty of men; but now it is already too full. I add that this commandment is not for individuals, but for all collectively; which indeed is sufficiently fulfilled when observed by many. Thus it is said: "And subdue it," namely by cultivating the land, yet individuals are not obligated to do so.

And God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that moves on the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat." And it was so.

Rabbi Solomon says here that "he equated them with cattle and beasts in food, and did not give permission to Adam and his wife to indulge in creation, or fatness, to eat flesh: but they all ate every herb of the field together. And when the children of Noah rested, he

made flesh lawful for them, as it is said: 'And everything that moves and lives shall be meat for you: as the herbs of the field, which I have made lawful for the first men, I have given you all.'

Rabbi Aben Ezra also feels the same here. He says, "He made it lawful for the sons of men to eat of everything in which there is living breath, every herb and every fruit of the tree he made lawful for man, and the herb of vegetables to the beasts and every reptile: and thus far he had not made flesh lawful until after the flood."

We explain it this way: After previously endowing man with the power of propagation for the preservation of the species, now He provides for the human race, as well as other living creatures, certain food from the fruits of the earth, which they were to eat and by which they would sustain life. However, it should not be thought that the same fruits of the earth assigned to man were also for the other living creatures; rather, it was provided that man would have the nobler produce: while the less valuable herbs and fruits were left for the animals. This is clearly suggested by the Hebrew Text. It states: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; it shall be food for you. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, every green herb, or the vegetable of herbs shall be food." It distinctly seems to assign different kinds of food for humans and beasts, which were consumed by man and other animals. The use of meat was not permitted by God to man before the flood, as all the Holy Doctors affirm, and the Hebrews also affirm the same. But after the flood, the consumption of meat was granted to man, with the Lord saying: "Into your hand are delivered all the fish of the sea. And everything that moves and lives shall be food for you; as I gave you all green herbs."

And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day: יום הַשְּׁשִׁי.

Rabbi Solomon says that "the letter ה is added in the sixth day, when completing the work of בְּרֵאשִׁית (creation), to say that a covenant was made with them under this condition, that Israel would take upon itself the five parts of the Law," or the Pentateuch. "Another word, or explanation: יום הַשְּׁשִׁי (the sixth day): everything hangs and stands until the sixth day; the ו is to indicate the place of waiting for the law."

Rabbi Aben Ezra feels differently. He says, "There are those who say that יום (day) is connected, and the sense or reason is to surround הַשִּׁשִּׁי, six; and so: יום הַשְּׁבִיעִי, the seventh day. And this is not true. And the sixth day has, according to the opinion of men, an affirmation of blessings." But his explanation is: "The day, which is the sixth [relative] to the first day, and so the seventh day. And so it is found also: הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי man, the Israelite, and many similar [examples]; as also: הַשָּׁמַיִם, the heavens, that is, the firmament, which is of the heavens."

However, setting these aside, we explain this passage as follows. God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good, or very good, (*valde bona, vel bonum valde*) as the Hebrew Text states. Here, God commends the universality of the works, rather than each individually. For each thing by itself is naturally good; but altogether, as they constitute the universe itself, they are in a way one and very good, that is, optimal due to the admirable order of the universe. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day: the sixth day from the first day, the sky having now revolved in a circle six times.

Chapter Two

Verses 1-3: Therefore, the heavens and the earth and all their ornamentation were completed. And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had accomplished. And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He ceased from all His work that He had created and done.

Rabbi Aben Ezra says that "ויכלו" (vayechulu)" is from the conjugation called Puhel, and its form is "weighed," and "ויכמו" (vayechamu)," all the mountains were covered; and its sense is "ושלמו" (nishlemu)," completed or perfected, and the sea in the entire earth, because it is like one collection. And God completed on the seventh day. Some say that the days were created, and in the creation of the seventh day, the work was perfected: and this explanation is tasteless or insipid. And some say that it is כ (b), because its sense is: before: just as: You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain. Nevertheless, the day on which He first rested is left; and how did He form and perfect this work? It is not work, as it is said, He did not do work. And so the explanation is: ויכל (vayechal), that is: וישבת (vayishbot), and He ceased, and the sense is: from His work, which He did on the sixth day, before the seventh day. And the sense is: and He ceased on the seventh day from all His work from all the creatures which He created. Rabbi Salomon on this brings the explanation of Rabbi Simeon, who said that "flesh and blood, that is man, does not know his time and his moment, or his point, it is necessary to add from the daily upon the holy of God blessed, who knows His time and His point, in which He enters like a fine thread, and it seems like these were perfected in the day, etc. דא (da), another explanation, that the world was deficient in future rest, the future Sabbath is perfected and completed by rest".

We, however, explain this passage in this way. Therefore, the heavens and the earth and all their ornamentation were completed, or, as the Hebrew text has, and the heavens and all their hosts were finished or completed. This is a summary and an epitome of all that was done in the previous six days and their ornamentation, which is hinted at by the hosts. And God completed His work on the seventh day, which He had made. The sense of this passage seems to be that God did some work on the seventh day, by doing which, all the works of creation were now completed. Thus, St. Jerome says here: "For the sixth day — *v* indeed the ancient translation had — the Hebrew has the seventh day. Therefore, we will constrain the Jews, who boast about the rest of the Sabbath, that already at the beginning the Sabbath was dissolved, while God works on the Sabbath, completing His works on it." Some assert that the woman was formed from the man's rib on the seventh day because the series of her formation is not written among the works of the six days; but after the seventh day had been introduced. Others, however, understand that He made the seventh day itself and completed His work by making it: which, by being made, now had the measure and number of the days, by the revolution of which all ages are rolled.

For my part, I find the opinion more acceptable that God is said to have completed His work on the seventh day because, having already made all the works in the preceding days, He added no new works, although He could have added many: but He completed His works because He did not add new ones, so that this is the same as what follows: And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. What does it mean: He rested? Did He become weary by working? But He rested because He ceased from making new creations. For to rest is said to cease, as we read in the Apocalypse: They had no rest saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, that is, they did not cease to say. Therefore, He rested because He did not create new things, and He did not add new kinds of creatures to those that

were already made. For whatever was made afterward had already been made in its kinds from the beginning, in which they were also made. Until now, however, He works in the administration of those same kinds which were established then. For the power of the Creator is the cause of the subsistence of the creature. Whence the Savior says: My Father works until now, and I work, showing the continuous administration of the whole creation. Therefore, on the seventh day, He rested, so as not to create a new creature, and until now He works, so as not to cease to sustain and govern what He has created.

And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He had ceased from all His work which He had created and made. Rabbi Salomon: "He blessed it in manna, because on all the days of the week, one homer per head would descend for them, and on the sixth day, the bread would double; and He sanctified it in manna, which did not descend at all. And the verse is written about the future." Rabbi Aben Ezra explains: "Blessing adds goodness, and on this day, the likeness of strength will be renewed in bodies, and in animals, the power of great wonder and understanding; and He sanctified it so that no work should be done on it." He further explains what follows: "Which God created to make, roots in all species, in which He placed the power to produce similar; and the exposition of לעשות (la'asot), to make, for עשה (asah), made, even made for created, is not so, according to my opinion. And Gaon said that the blessing and sanctification of the day are transferred to those who keep it, who are blessed and sanctified." But Rabbi Salomon says that "the work which seemed to be done on the Sabbath, He doubled and did on the sixth day, as is explained in Bereshit Rabba."

We, however, explain this passage in this way. God blessed and sanctified it. This blessing and sanctification pertain to the time, and it seems to have significance that at that time, that is, the seventh day, which we call the Sabbath, God especially and chiefly wanted

to be worshipped and sanctified, and He applied this seventh day to divine service, commanded it to be kept holy, and completely devoted to divine worship, and removed from all profane works or those contrary to or unrelated to divine worship, such as all works done by men for pleasure, convenience, or service; but man should sanctify this day by worshipping God, who is chiefly worshipped by faith, hope, and charity, and he should do the works of God on it, so that at last he may attain the true Sabbath.

But what is it: "Which God created to make?" Some refer "to make" not to God but to the work of God, so that God created His work and man especially for working, as an end, so that the creature should not be idle. Others refer it to God, that "which God created to make," because God took delight in His work; or because there are two principal works of God: creation and recreation; the former is mentioned to distinguish this work of creation from the work of recreation; and so "which God created to make," that is, which He created making, not remaking. For my part, I find it most acceptable that "created" refers to the Word, in whom God disposed all things, in whom all things were and were created; but "to make" refers to the work done externally in the six days of creation.

Verses 4-5: These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth and every shrub of the field before it grew on the earth, and every herb of the field before it sprouted.

Rabbi Salomon explains this passage as follows: "These, that is, what was said above, are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that God made, etc. It teaches you that everything was created in the beginning. Another explanation: when they were created: בהבראם (behibar'am), that is: בהי בראם (behei bera'am), in hei, He created them, as it is said in ביה ביה (be'ya yah tzur): God formed two worlds, in these two

letters of the name of God He formed two worlds; and it teaches you that just as this world was created in hei, it indicates that it descended below to see corruption, just as this hei is closed on all sides and open below to descend by the way there." He also explains the word טֶרֶם (terem), and says that "one of its meanings is: עַד לֹא (ad lo), before, and not: קֶדֶם (kedem), because it is not usually said: הַטְרִים (hatrim), like: הַקְדִּים (hikdim)." He assigns another meaning to it: עַד יֵינן לֹא (adayin lo), not yet, as in: כִּי טֶרֶם תִּירָאוּן (ki terem tira'un). Before you feared, that is: עַד יֵינן לֹא תִירָאוּן (adayin lo tira'un): You will not yet fear. And so it will be explained here: It was not yet on the earth until the creation of the world was completed on the sixth day, before man was created, and every herb of the field had not yet sprouted; and what is written on the third day: Let the earth produce, the sprouting of the herb stood until the sixth day."

Aben Ezra explains as follows: "These are the generations: the sense is: these are what were generated when they were created, when the firmament existed and the earth was seen. And the phrase: In the day that He made: בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת (beyom asot), is appropriate, and a testimony is: וַיִּמְהַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתוֹ (veyimaher la'asot oto): And he hastened to do it; and so: He created him, and afterwards: He formed him, and then: He made him. And every שִׁיחַ (si'ach), is עֵץ ('etz), tree, and so they are called among the seedlings; and in my opinion it is a fruit-bearing tree: because man is placed over the tree; and behold שִׁיחַ (si'ach), shrub, or sprout; and נֵיב (niv), leaf, or chaff; and מַעֲיֵף (me'if), shoot, or sprig; and בֵּד (bad), branch; and אֲמִיר (amir), upper branch; and מַעֲיֵף (me'if), common branch."

We, however, explain it this way. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth. In a summary and a certain epitome, whatever was said and written above is comprehended by the generation of the heavens and the earth, so that with the extremes, the highest and the lowest, being set, the intermediates as well, and finally all those things that are contained within the scope of the

heavens and the earth, should indeed be understood. The generation here is to be understood as the creation itself, as it is further stated: When they were created, produced from nothing by the infinite power of the Maker: In the day that the Lord God created, or as it is in the source, made the earth and the heavens. It is very common in Sacred Scripture for a singular word to be used in place of a plural, which we also think happened here, so that he says "in the day" instead of "in the days"; unless perhaps someone might say: in the primordial creatures, which received their being on the first day: because by a certain power whatever was formed in the succession of the following days was simultaneously produced and created and comprehended in them, and therefore he says "in the day," and not "in the days," in which the Lord God made them.

In this place, we first find the sacred and ineffable name of God, which is called the Tetragrammaton in Greek and שם מפורש (Shem HaMephorash) in Hebrew, יְהוָה (YHWH), which was not found before. Some Hebrews provide this reason why it is placed here and not before: so that God's appellation is incomplete where His perfect work is expressed. Indeed, this is the highest and greatest name of God, and most proper, which has never been given to any creature. It wonderfully explains the divine essence and whatever pertains to the divine nature within, with a certain arcane and most secret mystery, about which we will bring something to light in our discussion on Exodus, God granting us life and grace.

Heaven and earth. The Hebrew reading places the earth here before the heaven, lest we think, because heaven was previously placed before the earth, that it was indeed created first, and the earth afterward: but they were created simultaneously and by the most powerful word of God, although we cannot explain them simultaneously, but express one after the other; though they were made simultaneously, now He placed the earth before the heaven in the statement, not in the fact. And every shrub of the field, before it

was... and every herb, before it sprouted. Shrub, in Hebrew, is שִׁיחַ (si'ach), which the Chaldean paraphrase translates as אִילָנִי (illanei), tree. Rabbi Aben Ezra explains it as עֵץ פֶּרִי (etz peri), fruit-bearing tree; but it can also properly be called a shrub, for it often signifies a herb as well. But what does it mean, "before it was"? How did God produce them before they were? This expression can be understood in two ways; first: that when they did not exist, God already produced them entirely, and thus produced them before they were, that is, when they were not; the other understanding is: that God, by His omnipotence, made the shrub and every herb before they existed, that is, from natural causes by which the shrub and every herb were fit to be, they were produced into existence by divine power before their natural causes, from which they were to be naturally produced. For these generally arise in the course of nature from the watery moisture with which the earth is watered by rains, aided and arranged by human agriculture, industriousness, and skill. However, at the time when these were produced, there had been no rain, nor man to cultivate the earth. And this understanding seems to be more in line with the sense of Scripture; for it immediately removes these causes, stating:

Verse 6: For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Our edition has "a mist," which is accepted from the Septuagint; for they have it thus: Πηγή δὲ ἀνέβαινεν ἐκ τῆς γῆς: "A spring went up from the earth." However, the Hebrew reading has וַעַד (ve'ed), which means vapor or cloud. The Chaldean interpreter also translates it as אַנָּא (anan), that is, cloud. Rabbi Salomon explains here why the Lord God had not caused it to rain: "Because there was no man to cultivate the ground and to appreciate the goodness of the bodies; and when man came, he realized that they were necessary for the world, and he prayed over them, and they descended, and the trees

and herbs sprouted. ה (He) אלהים (Elohim): Lord God: ה (He), that is יהוה (YHWH) is His name; אלהים (Elohim) is the name of power and judgment over all; and thus this explanation applies everywhere, according to its simplicity: Lord: יהוה (YHWH), who is God: אלהים (Elohim)." And a mist went up. Rabbi Salomon says that "a mist went up for the creation of man; the abyss rose and watered the clouds to infuse the dust and create man, like a baker who gives water and then mixes the fragments; likewise, here it watered and then formed." Rabbi Aben Ezra says that "a mist went up like smoke from the earth, by the power of the luminaries and watered the earth and made it sprout. And Gaon says that its explanation is: And a mist did not go up from the earth."

We, however, explain it this way: when Moses stated that the primary production of all sprouts and herbs was not from natural causes but was done by the commanding and effecting power of God, he confirms this position in the present passage by showing that the natural causes of shrubs and sprouts were absent when these were first made by God. For the watery moisture, which is the principal and necessary sustenance and origin for the earth's produce, was not there when these things were made. This he makes clear by stating that the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth, nor was there a man to till the ground; for these things that arise from the earth are greatly aided by the diligence and labor of farmers, and they could not indeed be helped by these means since there was no man.

As for what follows: "But a mist went up," it is very pleasing if it is interpreted negatively; otherwise, it destroys Moses' reasoning given above. For if a mist went up and watered the whole face of the ground, the earth indeed had the watery moisture by which it could produce and nourish sprouts; and thus, the primary natural cause and origin of sprouts would not have been lacking. Or if, according to the Hebrew text, we understand vapor here, which would go up and

water the whole face of the ground, how is it true that the Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth? But if it is interpreted negatively, all objections cease, and the most solid reasoning is established, so that the primary production of sprouts is clearly understood to have arisen from God as the author, since their natural causes were entirely absent. For God had not caused it to rain, and thus the earth was not filled with watery moisture; nor could the earth be aided by the labor of farmers to produce sprouts, since there was no man to till it; nor did vapor ascend from the earth like a cloud, which, dissolved into water, would become rain and water the dry land; nor did any spring go up to water the earth.

But to avoid deviating too far from the common exposition of all and not to destroy the reasoning of the Holy Prophet, we interpret this assertively but with a future perspective. For the Hebrew text indeed reads: "And a mist will ascend and water the whole face of the ground," so that this does not refer to the production of their sprouts and shrubs, which was done on the third day, but to what will be done later by the power of nature. Therefore, the sense of Moses is this: the primary production of shrubs and sprouts was done by divine power; but what will later be done by the power of nature will be done in this way: a mist will ascend and, dissolved into water in the clouds of the sky, will become rain and will water the whole face of the ground; filling the earth with watery moisture, it will make it fertile.

Verse 7: The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

In Hebrew: The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his face or nostrils the spirit of lives, and man became a living soul.

The Chaldean paraphrase translates: The Lord God created man from the dust of the ground, and man became a spirit of speech: to show that man was made into a living soul with rational and intellectual life; for it is proper for those endowed with intellect alone to speak.

Rabbi Salomon on the word וַיִּצֶר (vayitzer), says, "it signifies two formations: the formation of this world and the formation of the resurrection of the dead; but in an animal, which does not rise for judgment, two ך are not written in its formation." Dust of the ground: he says, "He collected its dust from all the earth, from the four winds, because every place where a man dies is his holding for burial. Another explanation: He took its dust from the place of which it is said: You shall make me an altar of earth; and He added to it a covering, and it could stand. And He breathed into his face; and He made him from lower and upper elements: the body from the lower, and the soul from the upper. Just as on the first day, the heavens and the earth were created; on the second day, He created the firmament for the upper; on the third day, the dry land appeared for the lower; on the fourth day, He created the lights for the upper; on the fifth day, the waters produced for the lower; on the sixth day, He joined the creations of the upper and lower elements. And there is no envy in the works of creation, because these will be many above those that are in the creation of the first day. Into a living soul: both the beast and the animal are called a living soul; however, this life of man, which is in all, adds to him knowledge and reason."

Aben Ezra says that "the meaning of 'He breathed into his nostrils' is that in them man lives, because they expel warm air from the heat of the heart and bring in other air; and the meaning of 'into a living soul' is that he walked immediately, like animals, and not like infants." This teacher also says that the place of the earth from which man was created is near the Garden of Eden, because there are those who say that the land was the land of Israel; and behold,

they have forgotten: “And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east.” Some Hebrews make this distinction between נשמה (neshama), רוח (ruach), and נפש (nefesh): the first, indeed, is the sensible and rational soul, and it has its place in מוח (moach), that is, the brain, and it also signifies breath; the second, is the spirit having its seat in the heart, which is the origin of life, and it includes הכעם (hakoam), that is, the irascible power; the third, is the soul or the concupiscible power, having its seat in כבד (kaved), that is, the liver.

We, however, explain it this way. The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, or the dust of the earth, according to what is said below: “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Here we understand that God formed, or more significantly, fashioned the body of man; for, like a potter forming any vessel from clay, God, the creator of all things, formed the human body from the dust, a unique and noble creation shaped by the divine hand. Indeed, for no other creature is it explicitly stated that God was present in its formation; it is said in other cases: “Let the earth bring forth,” “Let the waters bring forth,” “Let there be a firmament,” “Let there be light,” “Let there be lights.” However, the divine words attest that the body of man was shaped and molded by God’s hand: “God formed man,” it says. Hence, the Blessed Job rightly exclaims, saying: “Your hands, Lord, have made me and fashioned me,” and the Holy David repeatedly affirmed: “Your hands have made me and fashioned me.”

I would not doubt at all that God formed the body of man entirely by Himself, without any other cause whatsoever intervening, but also used the ministry of angels. For what prevents angels from having performed some work with their ministry, for which their power and skill extended? Indeed, in the final resurrection of men, God will use the ministry of angels to reform the bodies of men; they will indeed gather the ashes and form the bodies. There is no doubt in my mind that the angels greatly desired to assist in the creation of man, so that

they might love us more and watch over us more diligently, as a work partly their own.

And He breathed into his face the breath of life, or the spirit of lives, according to the Hebrew text. God first created the lifeless body, and when it was formed, He created the soul of man and simultaneously infused it into the body. For the soul is not drawn out from the potential of matter in any way, nor can it be so drawn out; but it is immediately created by God and simultaneously infused, as the substantial form of man and the actual natural body. However, the soul, informing the body, does not extend to the mass of the body; for it cannot be measured by the quantity of the mass, since it is spirit; but it remains whole, undivided, and indivisible, wholly in the whole and wholly in each part of the whole.

But what is it: "the spirit of lives"? For man indeed lives with the life of plants, by which his limbs and members are nourished; he lives with the life of senses, by which he perceives all things sensible, whether received externally or internally; he also lives with a life of movement and progression, by which he seeks what is necessary for life; finally, he lives with rational and intellectual life, by which he is distinguished from animals and excels above all. But all these lives are effected in man by one spirit breathed into him by God; for there are not four souls in man carrying out these functions, but the virtues and powers of one soul. For what is soul in plants is a power of the soul in man, not a soul; and what is also soul in animals is a power and virtue of the soul in man. Thus, the souls of plants and animals, vegetative, sensitive, and motive, are contained in the soul of man in virtue and power, just as a triangle is contained in a quadrilateral; that is, the soul of man has the virtue and power to produce and cause all those effects in man that the vegetative soul produces in plants, and the sensitive and motive soul produces in animals, one existing soul encompassing the virtues of all these

more nobly and excellently, and therefore it is said: He breathed... the spirit of lives.

But it is said that God breathed this spirit into his face, because in the face all senses are perceived to be active, and from there reason and intellect are observed, in which internal affections are also revealed. Indeed, because the primary and principal life of man, by which he lives with reason and skill, and which is proper to man, is therefore added: And man became a living soul, or a soul of life, endowed with knowledge, skill, and reason. First, it says: "of lives": now it says "of life"; to signify that only the life that comes from understanding things is meant; and therefore the Chaldean paraphrase translates: "into a spirit of speech," or "speaking": for speech and eloquence pertain properly to the rational and intellectual creature; or: "Man became a living soul," that is, a living animal: for, having received the spirit into the lifeless body now formed, man became a living animal. For neither is the body an animal, nor the soul; but man is this rational animal composed of soul and body, as the form and the material. Therefore, man became a living soul, that is, a living animal, when the soul was first infused into the body; for in Sacred Scripture, the soul is often used to signify the whole composite being.

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The admirable condition of human nature should be considered here more attentively and with greater scrutiny, both with regard to the formation and structure of the body, the multiple powers, strengths, faculties, and functions of the soul, and the nature of the composite being made from these elements, so that it can be seen how admirable God's work, man, is. In this, we must follow the order given by the text: first, we will discuss the formation of the human body; second, the virtues of the soul; and third, the nature of the whole man. Moses proposes this order to us: "The Lord God formed

man from the dust of the ground": here is the body; "and breathed into his face the breath of life": here is the soul, the act and life-giving form of the body; "and man became a living soul": here is the being constituted from these elements.

The human body must have been composed of those elements into which it is now resolved, divided, and separated. The whole body is divided into the head, thorax, abdomen, and limbs; these are further divided into other parts: the head into the skull, face, eyes, forehead, nose, ears, and many others; the thorax into the chest, sides, and lungs; the abdomen into the belly and the underlying viscera; the limbs into the entire legs and arms, and these into shoulders, elbows, and hands; again, these individual parts are further subdivided, such as the hand into fingers and palms, fingers into other parts, such as skin, veins, flesh, arteries, nerves, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, membranes, and bones; similarly, other members, when thoroughly inspected, can be resolved into all these, or at least many. These parts are homogeneous and similar, having acquired a completely similar and uniform substance throughout; from which the parts called heterogeneous and dissimilar are then composed, when compacted together; they themselves, although they can be called simple, are clearly composed of elements, into which they are also resolved. Therefore, since the whole body is divided into all these parts, it is necessary that it was constituted from all these from its formation.

But since the progress of composition and resolution are opposite, it is clear that the body was first constituted from those elements into which it is ultimately resolved, and since it is ultimately dissolved into elements, it is evident that it was initially constituted from them. For the four elements first came together: earth, water, air, and fire; which accommodate and concur as the beginnings and principles for generating all things and are compacted by a certain mixture to form the human body, as well as other things that consist of a body.

The elements combined not without their forces and qualities, especially the primary ones, which are: heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. These are the principles from which other qualities arise, found in soft, hard, thick, thin, light, and rough bodies, which are varied and almost multifaceted; but the primary ones from which these arise are the first and most powerful of all. Therefore, the elements, from whose combination the body is compacted and formed, when they greatly agitate each other with changes and conversions, must possess these qualities, and these qualities are inherent in their highest degree in the individual elements: for instance, in fire the highest degree of heat, in air the highest degree of moisture, in water the highest degree of cold, and in earth the highest degree of dryness; so that nothing is hotter or lighter than pure fire, nothing is more humid than pure air, nor even water; for although water moistens more, it should not be thought to do so because of a fuller moisture; but because it is in a thicker and more flowing substance, while air, due to its thinness, cannot achieve this.

Thus, water is not more humid than air, but on the contrary, air holds the highest degree of humidity, while water holds the highest degree of cold, so that nothing is colder than pure water, not even ice.

Finally, nothing is drier than earth, although fire dries more: this, however, is incidental due to the presence of heat, as it exhausts and dissipates the moisture of bodies with its heat; but earth, absorbing the moisture poured on it, dries by itself. Furthermore, each element has another quality that is less intense, simple but not in its highest degree: this quality in fire is dryness accompanying heat, in air it is heat, in water it is moisture, and in earth it is coldness coupled with dryness.

Thus, with all these forces, the elements combined for the constitution of the body along with their substances; for the forces of the elements alone are not preserved in us without their substances: both the forces and the substances remain mixed; but the forces mix

entirely and mutually balance each other through a certain struggle, resulting in a temperate mixture spread throughout the whole mass of the composite body. The substances, however, are connected through a continuous conjunction and are divided into minute portions, arranging themselves in such an order that each part coheres with another of a different kind; nothing can be perceived by the senses that is not composed of these four elements. Therefore, small particles of the elements remain in the mixture and retain their entire forms; however, they are not free or independent, but entwined, bound, and almost intercepted by the mutual conflict of qualities and the presence of a more dominant form. Hence, they cannot exercise their original inherent powers—neither can fire burn nor water excessively cool; therefore, they are present only potentially, yet, when the mixture is dissolved upon death, they revert to their original state and reclaim their freedom.

The temperament of the elements, both in terms of forces and substances, I refer to not as the mixture itself, but as the manner of the mixture, and as a principle of the harmonious blending and balance of qualities in the mixed elements. This mixture is followed by the temperament as its propagation and offspring; and if the former is primarily of the elements, the latter is of the qualities, yet they follow and are joined together such that, just as the mixture is not without the assistance of the effective qualities, so the temperament cannot be induced without the substance of the elements. Therefore, the temperament is a certain harmony of the four primary qualities resulting from the mixture of all elements, whereby a harmonious and balanced proportion of both the elements and the qualities is achieved.

When the equal forces of the four natures—hot, cold, moist, and dry—come together in equal portions, the resulting mixture is called a balanced temperament, which is the standard and rule for all others. However, if one or at most two of these qualities dominate

over the others, an imbalance arises within the temperament. Since there are four elements from which the temperament is absolutely composed, the predominance of each results in four simple temperaments: hot, where heat surpasses cold while moisture and dryness are balanced; cold, where cold dominates; moist, where moisture prevails; and dry, where dryness is stronger than moisture.

When the opposing qualities are balanced, there are four other temperaments, known as compound temperaments, resulting from the predominance of two simple qualities. These are: hot and moist; hot and dry; cold and moist; cold and dry. There cannot be more because there are two oppositions limited by four boundaries, and each extremity of one cannot dominate.

Therefore, there are eight imbalanced temperaments, and one balanced temperament. The balanced temperament, being a mixture of equal portions of all the extreme qualities, is considered the most balanced and is referred to as the temperament of weight. It is believed by many to be the temperament of the human body, especially that of the first human. In man, the most noble and balanced of all temperaments is observed, which is most apparent in the sense of touch, the standard and judgment of discerning temperament. In the sense of touch, man surpasses all other animals.

After the mixture and temperament of the elements, both in substance and in force, follow innate heat, spirit, and primary moisture, which serve as bonds by which the soul is tied to the body, and when these are consumed, the soul must depart from the body. By the power of heat, nature has imparted to animals the ability to live, and with its extinction, death immediately follows. Therefore, it is not cold that is opposed to it as its contrary, but extinction, which is its privation: just as there is nothing contrary to light, but darkness, which is its privation; and if even a small amount of light

illuminates a body, we say it is illuminated; thus, as long as vital heat possesses even a small amount of the body, it governs it.

I do not refer to this heat as purely elemental, but rather as beyond the nature of the elements; for there is a consensus among all philosophers that defines life by heat and death by the extinction of heat. Aristotle defined death as the extinction of heat; thus, a dead animal is entirely devoid of this vital heat. If this were merely elemental heat, since there remains some mixture of the four elements in the individual parts of a corpse, a dead animal would still possess vital heat.

This heat resides in and is conveyed by the spirit, which is a fluid and flowing substance that permeates the entire body and can be distributed to each part through the arteries. Since the substance of the spirit is aerial or ethereal, corporeal, extremely fine, and swift, it can rapidly traverse the entire body. The spirit serves as the medium for the heat because it is also a substance friendly to sustaining heat.

Given that the spirit is a thin, ethereal substance infused with heat, it cannot exist or endure for long without the aid of moisture.

Therefore, the primary and vital moisture forms the foundation and primary substance of both the spirit and innate heat, much like the vapor and breath that rise from the substance of oil in a lamp, supporting the heat within the spirit. The moist substance of the oil in the lamp is the foundation and nourishment for both the flame and the vapor, sustaining and feeding them with alimentary moisture; similarly, primary moisture supports both the spirit and heat. Just as the flame cannot be sustained without either vapor or moisture, and neither can the vapor without the moisture, innate heat and spirit cannot persist without primary moisture. Thus, innate heat is suffused with spirit and moisture, while the spirit is a thin, ethereal substance infused with heat.

The primary and vital moisture, an airy, rich, and oily-like fluid, serves as the seat and substance of innate heat, interwoven with the substance of similar parts and escaping the keen observation of the eyes. Therefore, it is not the fat that we see covering many parts, but a much different substance; nor is it the alimentary humor, which is nourished and replenished; nor is it the aqueous humor, which helps similar parts of the body adhere and remain firm in solidity. This vital moisture is not one and simple, nor are the spirit and innate heat. Since these follow the temperaments present in similar parts, and not all similar parts are held by one and the same temperament—some being cold and dry, like bone, nerve, and membrane, while others are tempered by different temperaments—various temperaments are followed by different spirits, innate heats, and vital moistures.

Therefore, the primary and vital moisture, which supports the spirit and innate heat, is a unique, oily-like substance that binds to the body parts and is essential for life. It is replenished by alimentary moisture and differs from the other humors that provide cohesion and solidity to the body's parts. The spirit and innate heat, following the temperaments of the body parts, differ across the body, reflecting the diverse nature of the body's composition.

Additionally, beyond the spirits that are stable and fixed in each part according to the temperament of that part, there are three other wandering and errant spirits: the natural, the vital, and the animal. The natural spirit, which is distributed from the liver through the veins to the extremities of the body; the vital spirit, which the heart continually emits through the arteries; and the animal spirit, which proceeds from the brain through the nerves, irrigating the parts endowed with sensation and movement. These inflowing spirits are generated from the nourishment of the innate or implanted spirit's power.

The purer and more aerial part of the nourishment, through digestion, transforms into the finer substance of the blood, exhibiting a kind of vapor. This, however, receiving power from the innate spirit of the liver, becomes the natural spirit, superior to the rest of the blood in proportion to the natural power of the liver's mass. A portion of this spirit, carried through the vena cava along with the blood into the heart, is further refined by the heat there and transformed almost into the appearance of air, passing from the right ventricle of the heart, through common and very narrow passages, into the left ventricle. Here, having absorbed the tempered air from the lungs, it becomes a material infused with vital heat and power, producing the vital spirit which is spread throughout the body via the arteries.

A portion of this vital spirit, carried through the arteries of the neck to the base of the brain, is moderated by the intricate structure of the third ventricle and then transported into the brain's ventricles through another structure called the choroid plexus (χοροειδῆ). There, absorbing and refining the air through the nostrils, it receives nourishment and growth and, through the power of the spirit inherent in the brain, becomes the animal spirit. This spirit is suitably prepared for movement, sensation, and all the functions of animal life.

Having established the general structure of the body's parts, we now turn to examining the remarkable structure of the human body, created by God. It is worth discussing some details about both the homogeneous and heterogeneous parts of the body. We will first outline the dry and bony parts, then complete the discussion with the ligaments, nerves, muscles, veins, arteries, skin, and other internal and external parts.

The seat and origin of all bones is the spine, which can be compared to the keel of a ship. Just as the keel supports and holds together the

hull, bow, and stern of a ship, so does the spine support and hold together the body's mass. The spine is composed of many bones, called vertebrae, necessary for the flexibility and movement of the body. All the vertebrae are supported by the sacrum. The entire spine is divided into four parts: the sacrum, the lumbar region, the thoracic region, and the cervical region. The sacrum consists of six vertebrae; from its lower part hangs another bone, called the κόκκυξ (coccyx) in Greek, or the tailbone in Latin, which is composed of four slender, rounded, and largely cartilaginous bones.

Above the sacrum is the lumbar region with five vertebrae, followed by the thoracic region with twelve vertebrae, and finally the cervical region with seven vertebrae. Thus, there are thirty vertebrae in the spine, all marvelously interconnected and of various shapes. These vertebrae are rounded on the side facing the intestines, hence called σπονδύλαι (spondylai), while they have multiple projections on the outer side: some protrude from the middle, others are transverse on either side, and others extend up and down, through which the vertebrae are interwoven and connected. The extremities of all the vertebrae and their processes are surrounded by cartilage, into which thick and strong ligaments are inserted, ensuring the cohesion of the inner vertebral joints.

Next, we have the bones of the head, whose crown is covered by a rounded, globular skull, concave inwardly. One part, called the coronal suture, extends from the temples on either side to the crown of the head; another part is located at the occiput, stretching upward from the lower and posterior parts of the head on both sides; a third part runs along the length of the head, projecting into the middle of the crown with an angle. The skull is perforated by a large foramen (the foramen magnum), through which the medulla descends from the brain into the spinal canal. In these bones, there are serrated connections like a saw, interlocked with their teeth in a comb-like fashion.

Beneath these are the hard bones near each ear, called petrous bones due to their stony appearance and hardness, within whose cavities two bones resembling mallets can be seen; from each of these, a process like a small branch extends into a foramen, admitting sounds to the brain. The sixth bone is the frontal bone, which is double in the area of the eyebrows where it protrudes, enclosing an empty space leading to the nasal cavities; the upper part is surrounded by the coronal suture, while the lower part is reflected into the eye sockets, forming the upper walls of these cavities. Now, beneath these and the entire brain, like a base, lies a bone in which foramina can be seen on both sides, through which the projections of sensory nerves spread into the senses. Under its inner surface, two cavities lie hidden, containing the rete mirabile (a network of fine blood vessels) and other secrets of the brain.

Next are the bones of the face, which are divided by a double suture that runs from the space between the eyebrows, through the middle of the nose, and between the central teeth, cutting the palate lengthwise. The largest bone in the face is the maxilla, in which the roots of the upper teeth are embedded; near the roots of the front teeth, which cut, are two bones, distinguished by lines, and two very small bones at the gap of the nostrils, from which the upper lip arises. Between the eye and the ear is the zygomatic bone, which is hard and includes the temporal muscle. The nose carries two quadrangular bones as a sort of bulwark, extending from the bridge of the nose along its length, into which the cartilages called the alae (wings) are inserted.

Each eye socket has three bones, besides those forming the walls between the palate and the base of the brain up to the nose; on each side are various bones, delicate and thin, which are woven in various ways to form a sponge-like structure, hence called σπογγειδεῖς (spongy) in Greek. Additionally, another bone is fixed inside at the top of the nasal root, wide and thin, perforated in various ways like a

sieve, called ἠθμοειδής (ethmoid) in Greek, from which a hardened projection extends toward the brain; downward it sends a lamina-like growth, forming the septum of the nose, to which the lower part of the nasal cartilage is attached.

The lower jaw is formed by two bones, very tightly joined at the tip of the chin; each jaw is frequently perforated with small cavities, or alveoli, where individual teeth are embedded. There are typically sixteen teeth, sometimes more, occasionally fewer; of these, the front four are called incisors; next to these are two canines on each side, and beyond these are four molars on each side.

The thorax rests entirely on the back, having twelve vertebrae and twelve ribs on each side. The upper seven ribs are complete and perfect, connecting to the sternum, which has slight indentations for each rib. Therefore, the sternum itself consists of seven transverse bones, each corresponding to one of the complete ribs. At the lower end of this bone hangs an elongated cartilage, called the xiphoid process; the remaining five ribs are incomplete and end in cartilage, hence they are called false or floating ribs, as they are twisted and seem to stick together upwards.

The shoulder blades (scapulae) consist of two bones, triangular in shape. The bones of the arm are three: the humerus, the ulna, and the radius. The humerus is a single bone, the forearm (cubitus) has two bones, and the hand is divided into the palm and the fingers. The palm consists of twelve bones, while the fingers are made up of fifteen bones.

Next, the robust bones of the hips are firmly attached to the processes of the sacrum; each hip bone is articulated with the femur. Below these are the two bones of the lower leg (tibia and fibula), followed by the patella, the malleoli (ankles), the talus, and the

bones of the foot, which number twenty-three or twenty-four. Almost all bone extremities are covered with cartilage; there are also cartilages that stand alone, scarcely attached to any bone, such as those in the eyelashes, ears, throat, epiglottis, larynx, trachea, and at the base of the heart, which are formed solely for the sake of solid structure.

Next, the connection of bones is of various types, one through a joint and the other through a suture: by the latter, bones that do not move are joined by an indissoluble bond; by the former, movable bones are connected. There are also many ligaments, which are nery and very tough, solid, and bloodless. These ligaments are numerous and not all of one kind; some resemble solid membranes, while others are like cartilaginous tendons.

There are also many muscles and tendons. A muscle is constructed as follows: flesh grows around the nerve fibers, which are adapted for movement, supporting their strength; veins and arteries are interspersed; and everything is enclosed by a thin membrane that defines the muscle. Therefore, it has three parts in length: the origin, the middle, and the insertion. The origin is nery; the middle consists of all the components mentioned; the insertion is a tendon formed by the interweaving and blending of nerve and ligament fibers, becoming tougher and more robust than a nerve for movement but softer and weaker than a ligament. This tendon is endowed with a medium nature, excelling in sensitivity compared to the ligament but inferior in this respect to the nerve.

Verse 8: And the Lord God planted a garden of delight from the beginning, in which He placed the man whom He had formed.

In Hebrew: The Lord God planted a garden in Eden to the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

The Chaldean interpreter: And He planted it first, or from ancient times.

The Septuagint translates: Καὶ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδέμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς: And God planted a paradise in Eden to the east.

Such diversity among the interpreters arises because there are two ambiguous words in the Hebrew text: עֵדֶן (Eden) and קֶדֶם (kedem). The word עֵדֶן (Eden) often signifies delights and pleasure in Sacred Scripture; however, it sometimes refers to a specific place or province. קֶדֶם (kedem) often denotes temporal priority in Scripture, and its most frequent meaning is "east." Our edition takes these two words according to their former meanings, although later it takes them according to the other meanings, as it says about Cain: "And he dwelt to the east of Eden." The Hebrews interpret these words according to the latter meanings, as Rabbi Aben Ezra and Rabbi Salomon testify here, asserting that God planted this garden in a place called Eden, in the eastern part of that location, which the servile כ (be) also indicates.

The Hebrew text thus reads: "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, to the east, or on the eastern side." Therefore, Sacred Scripture indicates the place where God planted this garden, or paradise—a term of Persian or rather Hebrew origin, from פֶּרְדִּים (pardes), meaning paradise. It refers to the region of Eden, named so for its pleasantness and abundance of delights. Then it declares in which part of that region it was located, namely, to the eastern side.

From this, it can be observed that what is said here about this paradise is not to be understood so spiritually that the historical sense is lost, as St. Augustine rightly warns with these words: "What can be conveniently said about paradise in a spiritual sense, should be said by no one prohibiting it, as long as the most faithful truth of that history is believed in the narration of the events." For if paradise

is not sensible and corporeal, then there is also no fountain; if no fountain, then no river; if no river, neither is it divided into four heads; there is no Phison, no Gehon, no Tigris, nor Euphrates; no fig leaves, nor leaves to sew together to make loincloths; nor did Eve eat from the tree; nor were there living animals that were brought to Adam, nor did Adam give them names; but all truth would turn into a fable.

Therefore, God planted a sensible and corporeal paradise, a place filled with all delights, with the most pleasant herbs and flowers and plants, where the most delightful trees, laden with all kinds of abundant fruits, which were both beautiful to look at and delicious to taste, were found. There He placed the man whom He had formed, so that he might lead a happy and almost blessed life there. As He had formed man perfectly, so He gave him a place most suitable for his initial perfection, a divine region worthy of his company, who was made in the image of God.

Verse 9: And the Lord God brought forth from the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In Hebrew: And the Lord God made to sprout from the ground every tree desirable to the sight and good for food, and the tree of lives in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Chaldean interpreter also has: "Desirable tree"; for what in Hebrew is כֹּל־עֵץ נְחָמָד (kol-etz nechmad), he has כֹּל־אֵילָן דִּמְרָנָן (kol-ilan dimrannan), that is: "Every desirable tree."

Rabbi Salomon says these words are spoken because of paradise. Rabbi Aben Ezra, interpreting יַצְמַח (yatzmach) as הִצְמִיחַ (hitzmiach),

"made to sprout" in the hiphil form, says that God made every tree sprout in the garden.

Moses begins to describe paradise here, first declaring how it was planted with every kind of tree, which the Lord brought forth from the ground, trees that were sweet to the taste and delightful and desirable to the sight, intended for man's consumption. For man needed to eat even before he was weakened by sin, to preserve his life and not die. Indeed, man was made mortal by nature, since he was composed of corruptible elements, which act upon and suffer from each other in turn; and anything of such a nature must necessarily be subject to corruption, since no violent thing can be perpetual. Man, therefore, being made of elements with mutual contrariety, was by nature corruptible and mortal: yet by the gift of grace, he was made immortal, that is, capable of not dying; for God had provided him with remedies against the force of death, so that by persevering in the state in which God had created and established him, he would not be subject to the necessity of dying.

Man could then suffer the force of death in three principal ways: either from the contrariety of the elements and the intemperance of the humors, from which diseases and death now originate; or from a lack of food and nourishment, and the loss of radical moisture and failing strength; or finally from external harm: for he could be consumed by fire, drowned by water, crushed by a heavy mass falling upon him, or affected by the injuries of the air; and many other external factors, either from which man could not protect himself, or to which he might willingly expose himself, could certainly bring him death and destruction. Against all these, the most benevolent God had provided man with protection, so that if he had willed, he could not have been removed from life by any means of death.

Indeed, against the first cause, God had endowed him with original justice, which would have always maintained the elements in perfect proportion and the humors in the most peaceful temperance in which God had created man, thus removing the primary cause of death. Against the second cause, to preserve his animal life, which required food, God provided every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. And so that man would not grow old and end his life due to the loss of radical moisture by the action of natural heat—since the food he ate could not equally replace the lost moisture (whence old age and the decline of life originate, as the flesh generated by food is always more impure and weaker in strength, which is easily seen in old age where the flesh is more impure and weaker)—God placed the tree of life in the middle of paradise, which would perpetually preserve this virtue of moisture in man. Its nourishment added as much strength to the moisture as natural heat consumed. Hence, it was called the tree of life because its nourishment perpetually sustained human life and warded off old age. Augustine rightly says: "Food was available to man so that he would not hunger; drink so that he would not thirst; the tree of life so that old age would not dissolve him."

Against the third cause, God endowed man with keen prudence to avoid harmful things; and against those from which his prudence could not protect him, he was guarded by angelic protection and divine providence, which assisted and prevented all corrupting influences from external sources, preserving and protecting him from all violence. To prevent him from being affected by the injuries of the air, God placed him in paradise, where the air was of the most gentle temperance and the location the most delightful.

In this paradise, God produced every tree that is pleasant to the sight for man's solace and pleasure, and good for food to provide delicious taste so that man would never feel hunger; also the tree of life, so that old age would not weigh him down and ultimately dissolve him.

As Bede and Strabus testify, "The tree of life was so called because it divinely received the power that whoever ate its fruit would have his body strengthened with stable health and perpetual solidity, and would not fall into decay or decline due to any infirmity or the weakness of age."

There was also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so that man might be exercised in virtue and have merit, and recognize God as his sovereign. This tree was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not by nature, but by the occasion of the event that followed. For man knew good and evil even before he took from this tree: good through prudence and experience, and evil through prudence only, not through experience. He came to know evil through experience when he tasted the forbidden tree: through this eating, he also knew the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, which he had not previously known through experience. Therefore, that tree is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not because there was any inherent power in it to induce such knowledge, unless perhaps it could have happened dispositively, since the soul acquires knowledge and understanding of things through the body's organs. This, however, would have been incidental; but because those who tasted it would come to know through experience what is good and what is evil: good, which they would lose; and evil, which they would incur.

Verse 10: And a river went out of the place of pleasure to water the garden, which from there is divided into four heads.

In Hebrew: And a river goes out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it is divided and becomes four heads.

The Chaldean interpreter has: And it became into four heads of rivers.

Rabbi Aben Ezra notes here that before man was created, there was a river watering the garden from all directions.

The pleasantness of paradise is described here in terms of the irrigation of its waters: because from the place where God had planted paradise, called Eden, a great river originates, which waters and fertilizes the whole of paradise; and from there, going out of paradise, it is divided into four principal rivers, which are the chief rivers, according to the Chaldean paraphrase.

Verses 11-12: The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that encircles all the land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

Aben Ezra says here that Gaon states that Pishon is the river of Egypt. Rabbi Salomon says that “it is the Nile, the river of Egypt, and because its waters gather and rise and irrigate or inundate the land, it is called Pishon, almost like פֶּשׁוּ (pashu): they have increased”; this is his interpretation. Some of our scholars think this river is the Nile, while others think it is the Ganges, and they say the land of Havilah is a certain region of India, named after Havilah, the son of Joktan; which is said to be very rich in gold, hence it is said: “There is gold, and the gold of that land is good.” Bdellium is also found there, from the Hebrew בְּדֹלַח (bedolach), which the Septuagint translates as ἄνθραξ (anthrax), meaning carbuncle, although elsewhere they interpret it as crystal, which the Hebrews now commonly hold; although Gaon, as Aben Ezra reports, said that בְּדֹלַח are small and round stones that come out of the waters, are thin, and manna is compared to them. For Scripture says that the appearance of manna was like the appearance of בְּדֹלַח (bedolach), and manna is like pearl. Therefore, I think this stone is a pearl.

There is also found the onyx stone: הַשֹּׁהַם (hasoham), which the Septuagint translates as Καὶ ὁ λίθος ὁ πράσινος (kai ho lithos ho prasinus), meaning the prase stone. Gaon, according to Aben Ezra,

says that הַשֹּׁהַם (hasoham) is a precious stone, white and clear; therefore, he seems to consider it to be the onyx stone. The Chaldean interpreter also translates it as אַבְנֵי אִוְרָא (abnei urla), meaning onyx stone. However, Aben Ezra says he does not know; hence the Hebrews do not know what kind of stones these are.

It should be noted here, however, that there were two Havilahs: one gave its name to Getulia, and the other to the region near Ophir, from which gold was brought. The former was a grandson of Ham, and the latter, from the line of Shem, was a son of Eber. Therefore, when it is said that this river encircles the land of Havilah, I believe it refers to the second Havilah.

Verses 13-14: The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that encircles all the land of Ethiopia. The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

Regarding Gihon, there is considerable debate. Aben Ezra states that it is known that this river is near the land of Israel, as it is written: "And you shall lead him down to Gihon." He also says that it comes from the east and flows south. The place he cites is in the anointing of Solomon, where David commanded that he be taken to that place. The Chaldean interpreter translates נִיְחוֹן (Nihon) as שִׁילֹחַ (Siloah), as does Nicholas. Rabbi Joseph Kimchi thinks the river is the Nile of Egypt, so called because it flows out to irrigate the land. Nearly all of our scholars assert that this river is indeed the Nile, for it is said to irrigate Ethiopia, descending from there into Egypt. Others think it is another river, near the Tigris and Euphrates. They argue that Chus (Cush) does not always mean the Ethiopia where the sources of the Nile are said to be, but also Arabia and the entire region facing the ocean. The Midianites are sometimes called Ethiopians, though they are near Palestine; and Zipporah, Moses' wife, is called an Ethiopian, though she was from the land of Midian. Therefore, even

if Gihon is said to travel through Ethiopia, they are not compelled to think it is the Nile.

These scholars also assert that Pishon is not the Ganges, but another river in Mesopotamia, thinking that the land of Havilah, which this river is said to traverse, is the region known by historians as Cabalia or Cabana, near Mesopotamia. They also mention a city in Mesopotamia named Phison, after the river. We, however, cannot assert anything certain about these matters.

There is no doubt about the Tigris and Euphrates; the Tigris flows eastward toward Syria, and the Euphrates forms the boundary of the Promised Land on the eastern side. The Tigris is called **חִדְקֵל** (Hiddekel) in Hebrew, because, as Rabbi Salomon says, "its waters are thin and light"; the Euphrates is **פְּרַת** (Perat), "because its waters grow and multiply and cause man to grow."

Verse 15: The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to work it and keep it.

In Hebrew: The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate it and keep it.

The Hebrew word **גַּן** (gan) can be of both masculine and feminine gender, even in the plural, as Aben Ezra notes here; but in this instance, with the feminine affix, it necessarily refers not to the man but to the garden.

The Sacred Scripture implies that man was formed outside paradise, and the Lord took him from the place where He had formed him and placed him to reside and live quietly in that most delightful paradise. To work it, that is, to cultivate that garden, which he would then do with a certain pleasant delight, as an exercise of his virtue, without any sweat or fatigue, but with cheerfulness of mind and all ease. I do not doubt that Adam was endowed with the knowledge of the stars

from the beginning, since he was destined to cultivate the earth, so that he already had a clear understanding of the earth's potential and the changes of the seasons, to ensure the timely production of fruits. And to keep it, that is, the paradise, as Aben Ezra says, from all beasts, so that they would not gather there and damage it. Some say that God warned the man to guard himself against the deceitful serpent, Satan, lest he, having fallen into sin through his tricks and frauds, deserved to be expelled from paradise.

Verses 16-17: And the Lord God commanded him, saying: “Of every tree of paradise, you shall eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat; for in whatever day you shall eat from it, you shall surely die.”

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying: “Of every tree of paradise, you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die.”

The Chaldean interpreter translates: “And of the tree, whose fruits make those who eat them wise between good and evil, you shall not eat from it.”

According to Aben Ezra, in the third chapter of Genesis, “these words: 'You shall surely die,' are interpreted differently by many; some say: you will then be guilty of death; others say that death is the punishment, as it is said: 'For the man who does this is worthy of death'; others say that from then you will become sick, which means you will die.” He also says: “צַו (yitzav) is a word with a negative command”; and he explains: “Although I have allowed you to eat all the fruits of the trees of the garden, do not eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But after he said: 'You shall not eat from the tree of the knowledge,' why was it necessary to add: 'from it'?

Nevertheless, it was added for clarification; and it is like: 'And she opened and saw him, the child'; or its sense is: even a little from it.

And note that Adam was full of knowledge because God did not command him who has no knowledge; but the knowledge of good and evil in one thing alone he did not know! Do you not see that he named all the beasts and birds according to each one's kind? And behold, he was a great wise man."

Above, we read that man was made by God to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, all the beasts, and the whole earth. Now, however, so that man might know he was subject to divine authority and that the one who created him would always be his Lord, he receives a command from God: though he may use all the trees of paradise for his sustenance, he must never eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It must not be thought that this tree was naturally evil or harmful to man; indeed, it was naturally good, pleasant to the sight, and sweet for food. Yet God forbade it to show that He rightfully had dominion over man, and so that man himself might continuously gain the excellent merits of holy obedience, as he should refrain from such a tree only out of the regard for holy virtue: for it was naturally a good thing, and he should not withdraw his hand from it, except by the command and authority of the sovereign God.

But because the guilt of transgression is immediately followed by the penalty, it is thus that it is added: "For in whatever hour you eat from it, you shall surely die," or "dying you shall die," or "you shall be mortal." Indeed, as soon as he ate from the forbidden tree, he died a death of guilt; which the death of the body followed in due time; for on that very day he began to be mortal and subject to corruption and began to move towards death and the ultimate end of life.

It is important to note here that this command was not explicitly given to the woman, who was formed afterward, but to the man alone, in whom all were included, who, as existing in him, were bound by the same command. Therefore, the woman sinned by

eating the forbidden tree, because it was also commanded to her through Adam by God not to eat; for the man was appointed as the head of the woman, after she was formed from him.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy here that the first man was created endowed with free will, so that he could merit and demerit. Hence, it is rightly said in Ecclesiasticus: “God from the beginning made man and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts: if you will keep the commandments, they will preserve you, and keep faith pleasing forever. He has set before you fire and water: stretch forth your hand to whichever you will; before man is life and death, good and evil: whichever pleases him shall be given to him; for the wisdom of God is great, and He is mighty in power, seeing all men continually.”

Verse 18: And the Lord God said: “It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a helper similar to him.”

Hebrew Text: “It is not good for Adam to be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him.”

The Septuagint, however, translates it as “let us make,” as does our edition; for it has: Ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ' αὐτόν: that is, “Let us make him a helper fitting for him”; perhaps they took this from the preceding context, where it is: “let us make.”

The Chaldean interpreter translates the full Hebrew text: “I will make him a helper, or a support, corresponding to him.”

Aben Ezra explains: “It is not good for the man himself, according to the saying: Two are better than one.”

We, however, think this refers to marriage; for neither man nor woman alone suffices for procreation and the bearing of children, but the union of both. Therefore, since Adam alone was not sufficient to procreate children for God's glory, He said: “It is not good for man to be alone”; indeed, the propagation and

multiplication of human nature were taken away, which is a great good. So that men might increase and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, God said: “I will make him a helper to propagate, and to care for and nourish the offspring.” And He rightly said: “a helper”; for the principal agent is not the woman, but the man, who is the primary companion in this society. Therefore, God proposes to make a helper for man, similar in nature and form: similar, not identical; for all similarity must necessarily include some dissimilarity, otherwise it is not similarity, but identity. Thus, the woman is called a helper similar to man: for although of the same nature and form, there is a difference in sex; or because she is before him, or opposite to him, which is unique in human nature and not found among animals.

Verse 19: And the Lord God, having formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God formed from the ground every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam, etc.

Chaldean Interpreter: And the Lord God created, etc.

This formation is the same as previously mentioned, where it says: “And God made every beast of the earth,” etc.

Aben Ezra, having explained that man was full of knowledge because he named the animals, says on this: “Perhaps it was so: God did not bring His creatures to him, that is, to the man, to see what he would call them; for he knew from this what each beast or animal was. God also showed him the tree of knowledge, because his wife knew that it was in the midst of the garden.” I, however, truly believe that they were brought to him, and not merely in his imagination.

It should be noted here that both the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air are said to have been formed by the Lord from earthly matter, although it previously seemed that He commanded the waters to bring forth the creeping creatures and the birds flying under the firmament of heaven. This, Aben Ezra says, is because the birds were formed from both water and earth.

And He brought them to Adam. It is not to be thought that the Lord, like a man, brought them by hand or by ropes, or by the ministry of angels, as some say; but He instilled in these animals an impulse to approach the man, as if recognizing him as their lord and to be recognized by him, so that he might give a name to each species according to its properties. Therefore, it says: "to see what he would call them." This can refer both to God and to Adam himself. If it is referred to God, it has this meaning: "to see what he would call them," that is, Adam; not as if God Himself did not know, but in the usual manner of speaking in Scripture, which signifies making something apparent; so that man, being inwardly taught and enlightened by God, would, by the sight of the animals coming to him, guided by God, recognize their natures and the differences of their species and their inner properties, and, after observing and contemplating their natures, would give them names as required by the nature and property of each.

We can also explain it otherwise: "to see," that is, for the man himself to see what he would call them, so that from the object presented to him and by contemplating their natures, aided greatly by sight for knowing their natures, he might carefully consider, not only with bodily sight but also with the intuition of the mind, the natural and inner properties, inclinations, and uses of the animals, and see what he would call them, so that the name of each would correspond to its property.

Verses 19-20: For whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. And Adam gave names to all the cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.

Hebrew Text: And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. And Adam gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air, and every beast of the field.

Moses wonderfully shows here that Adam, without any experience, had a knowledge and contemplative understanding of natural things, particularly of the animals, in which this knowledge is especially involved. By saying, "For whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name," he shows that the names Adam gave to things were such that they perfectly declared the natures and properties of those things. For Adam imposed such wonderfully articulated natural voices as names to signify that the names given were expressive and meaningful, having a significance corresponding to the properties of the animals. This was accomplished not by the nature of the words themselves, but by the intelligence, knowledge, reason, and supreme wisdom of the one imposing the names.

And Adam gave names to all the animals, that is, to the livestock, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the earth, with names that suitably expressed and signified their natures, species, and properties. Fish are omitted because they were not brought to him, though he could easily infer their natures from those of terrestrial animals. This naming of all the animals by Adam is most likely believed to have been done in the Hebrew language, which is considered the holiest and fullest language. It is believed that Adam invented and established it, and it was used through all posterity until the division of languages. The names that we read in Sacred Scripture up to that time are seen to be Hebrew; thus, it remained in

the Hebrew lineage and family and has endured up to our times in his descendants, who descended from him through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob according to the flesh.

But for Adam, there was not found a helper like him.

This we have already explained above. Yet, as Adam was by nature a sociable being even in that state, to prevent him from lacking sweet companionship and being deprived of the dearest union, Moses now begins to lucidly describe how God provided man with a helper similar to him.

Verses 21-22: And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and when he was asleep, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. And the Lord God built the rib which He had taken from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God caused a תרדמה (tardemah), that is, a deep sleep, to fall upon Adam.

In the Hebrew language, there are three words signifying sleep: תנומה (tenumah), שינה (shenah), and תרדמה (tardemah). The first word, שינה (shenah), refers to a light sleep; the second signifies a stronger sleep; the third denotes the deepest sleep. Aben Ezra, in his exposition of this passage, explains this. The Lord caused this to fall upon Adam, or over Adam, and he slept.

The Septuagint translates this word as ἔκστασις (ekstasin), which means a trance or a state of mental secession and alienation, a kind of deprivation of the senses.

The Chaldean interpreter translates: "The Lord God cast a שִׁטָּה (shitta)," that is, a sleep, upon Adam: וְדָמָה (udmukh), meaning "and he was oppressed by sleep," so that from one man the whole human race would come forth, as he was the beginning and origin of the entire human race.

Since God wanted to create a helper similar to Adam, who was now deprived of the solace of a companion, He took a rib from his side and built it into a woman. To prevent Adam from feeling this removal, the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon him. This sleep is rightly said to have been caused by God in Adam, since it was not generated by the evaporation of food or any other natural cause: but Adam was overcome by it through God's intervention, so it is not necessary to attribute it to a natural cause. Therefore, with Adam in a deep sleep, God took one of his ribs.

There has been considerable debate among many regarding whether the rib from which the woman was made was superfluous in Adam or taken from the integrity of his body. If that rib was superfluous, then surely the first man formed by God would have been monstrous, having an extra rib; but if it was not superfluous, then it follows that the first man was rendered mutilated and maimed, missing a rib taken by God. Both of these conclusions are problematic.

Most have responded to this difficulty by saying that the rib was indeed superfluous to that individual man, in that it was a certain definite thing, existing and subsisting by itself; but insofar as that man was the principle from which the whole human race was to originate and propagate, the rib was by no means superfluous but necessary, from which the woman was to be produced. Therefore, the rib was superfluous to the hypostasis of that man, but not entirely superfluous; it was like a seed, which is superfluous in relation to the individual but necessary in relation to the species, as it is the principle for producing something similar to itself for the perpetuation of the species.

This response did not entirely displease me at one time; however, upon further mature consideration, it neither seemed entirely consistent nor sufficiently aligned with the truth. For it is enough,

someone might say, that in the first man, insofar as he was a man, the rib was superfluous, to be considered absurd; it follows that this man was monstrous, which is not to be said of anything in the first creation of things. And if that rib did not pertain to that man according to the truth of his particular nature, it could not properly be said that the woman originated from that man, nor from his bones. For that bone in the man was redundant; it could not properly be said to be a bone from the man's bones and flesh from his flesh; nor that one of the man's ribs was taken if that rib was superfluous; which is contrary to Scripture. Finally, why would God need to fill in the flesh for that rib if it was superfluous? Surely, if God filled in the flesh in its place, it must be said either that the rib was not superfluous, or that the flesh filled in by God was superfluous and redundant, and the man remained monstrous nevertheless.

Nor is it very similar to the case of the seed. For seed is natural to man, cut from his blood and marrow for the purpose of generating; it does not make a man monstrous, but rather disposed to procreation, which is most natural to animals. These things cannot be said about that rib. It seems both consistent with truth and reason to say that the rib was taken from the integrity and true nature of that man: from this, none of the assigned inconveniences follow.

But someone might say that the man was afterward maimed, as if he lacked one rib. However, this is not the case, since the Lord filled the flesh in place of that rib; nor should it be thought that the flesh placed there by God was without bone: just as no one can assert that the rib taken was without flesh, as it is written: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"; thus, it is declared that not only the bone from his bones but also the flesh from his flesh was taken. If, therefore, by the term 'bone' is meant the rib, which was built into the woman, and this includes both bone and flesh, it is not inconvenient to understand that, conversely, the term 'flesh' might include bone along with flesh, especially since Scripture often calls

the whole man by the name of 'flesh.' When Scripture states that God replaced the rib with flesh, it should be understood that He replaced the flesh not without bone, since flesh alone without bone would not have been adequately substituted for bone with flesh.

Adam, therefore, being in a deep sleep, with a rib taken from his side and replaced with flesh, or, according to the Hebrew, with the place closed up with flesh, God built the rib that He had taken from Adam into a woman, in the condition of a woman. Moses did not use the word 'forming' or 'generating,' but 'building': "And He built it into a woman," so that we might understand that the woman was produced not by the way of nature, but by the art of God; hence she was not properly the daughter of Adam, but a creature immediately made by God.

How the body of the woman was made from that rib is known to Him who made it. It can, however, be said that either He added another substance to it, or created another substance from nothing, or by the command and omnipotent power of God, the substance of the rib itself, without any external addition, was multiplied and increased in itself, taking on larger dimensions, and from it the body of the woman could be formed, in a miracle similar to how five thousand people were later fed from five loaves, multiplied by the heavenly power of Jesus Christ. Nor would I doubt that God used the ministry of angels in the formation of the woman.

The Lord then brought her to Adam as his companion and spouse. For this reason, He formed her from a rib, not from the head or the foot: because God gave the woman to the man not as a mistress or a servant, but as a wife and companion. It is said that the Lord brought the woman to Adam because it was by His authority that the woman came to the man; He inspired this very thing in her mind and instilled the impulse to approach him from whom she was taken, as her husband and inseparable spouse. Therefore, God, as the

reconciler of the man and woman and the matchmaker of their social marriage, brought the woman to the man; whom the man recognized as being from himself and, as a most welcome bride given to him by God, loved and cherished greatly. Hence it follows:

Verses 23-24: And Adam said: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Hebrew Text: And Adam said: "This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; therefore she shall be called **אִשָּׁה** (Ishah), Woman, because she was taken out of **אִישׁ** (Ish), Man."

What our interpreter has translated as "She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" in Hebrew is **אִישׁ** (Ish) for man and **אִשָּׁה** (Ishah) for woman. Just as the woman was derived from the man, so the name of the woman was derived from the name of the man. This cannot be achieved in any other language, as evidenced by the fact that no translator has satisfactorily rendered this passage.

The Septuagint translates this passage as: *Αὕτη κληθήσεται γυνή, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς ἐλήμφθη*: "She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of her Man"; this does not seem to preserve the connection.

The Chaldean interpreter also translates this passage as: **לְאִשָּׁה יִתְקַרֵּי מִבְּעָלָהּ נְסִיבָא דָּא**: "She shall be called Woman because she was taken from her man."

Our interpreter, however, derived 'virago' from 'vir' (man).

This was not done out of the interpreters' ignorance but because different idioms cannot precisely imitate this Hebrew. Hence, Rabbi Salomon argues that the world was created in the holy language. Rabbi Aben Ezra interprets the phrase "This time it is bone of my

bones" as: "Then he said: this time I have found a helper suitable for me, like myself, because she is from me."

Verses 23-24: And Adam said: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

We interpret this passage differently. "This now is bone," meaning that at this particular moment, a helper similar to man is built from man alone rather than being born; for later, spouses will be united from natural offspring. It is also noteworthy that Adam supernaturally recognized that the woman was made from him. Thus, he spoke prophetically; for as soon as he said: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" —which teaches us that the woman was formed not only from the man's bone but also from his flesh,— "she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" —it is fitting that if the woman was built from the man's substance and nature, her name should also be derived from the man's name; and those who share the same nature should have the same name, with a slight difference to reflect their distinction in sex.

He then added a prophecy, saying: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife." These words command and establish the sacred institution of marriage. God is the one who spoke these words through Adam, as our Lord Jesus Christ expressed in Matthew, saying: "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

However, this leaving is not to be understood in terms of abandoning the love and duty of care towards one's parents. A man is always obligated to love and honor his parents; but in terms of

cohabitation, a son who takes a wife is not required to live with his parents but with his wife. The Chaldean Paraphrast accurately translated: "For this reason, a man shall leave the home of his father's and mother's bed and be joined to his wife." The son, upon marrying, is no longer required to reside with his parents but with his wife, and he must provide for the necessities of life for himself, his wife, and their shared family. Even if parents face any necessities or difficulties, a man is more obligated to his wife and family than to his parents. If he cannot support both, he must prioritize his wife and family over his parents. Thus, the duties owed to a wife are considered to take precedence over the duties to parents if both cannot be fulfilled simultaneously.

And they shall become one flesh, or according to the Hebrew: They shall be in one flesh. This passage has been interpreted in various ways by both Hebrew and Latin scholars. Some of the Latins and Rabbi Salomon have interpreted this as referring to offspring, for the purpose of which a man and woman unite, and through whom their flesh becomes one. Others, with whom Aben Ezra agrees, interpret it to mean that when a man adheres to and is joined with a woman as his married wife through matrimonial union according to the flesh, both become one flesh as Adam and Eve were originally; thus, the meaning is: He will adhere to his lawful wife through carnal union, and from this adherence, they become one flesh, making the marriage valid and indissoluble. This union naturally has this effect due to the consent that God supports, making the two flesh one and creating an indissoluble bond; hence, the phrase "they shall become" is a command and prohibition of divine will, indicating that where they adhere lawfully by God's will through the sacrament of marriage, they are to remain inseparable as one flesh, each having a right over that flesh.

Since man and woman have become one flesh, they can never be separated from each other, nor joined to another flesh; for it is a

fundamental property of one flesh that its parts must cherish, nourish, and assist each other, not being separated or joined to another flesh. What are parts of an individual must be incommunicable to another individual. Therefore, it is manifest and clear that this word does not support the plurality of wives, but rather prohibits it, and that divorce should always have been illicit, as the Lord said: "What... God has joined together, let not man separate." However, these were permitted by Moses at times due to the wickedness and hardness of heart of the Jews.

It should also be noted that such is the nature of this adherence and union of a man to a woman that it results in them becoming one flesh, not only in legitimate marriage but also in adulterous and promiscuous unions, as testified by the Apostle who says: "Do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot becomes one body with her? For, he says, the two shall become one flesh." Not that in the place he cites the reference is to promiscuous commerce and adherence, but because such a union by its nature has that effect; and therefore, even in a harlot, it establishes that obligation, so that whoever joins with her is now bound as if they cannot belong to another, because they have become one body with her; and again, they cannot belong to her in usage without sin, because God does not approve but reproves such a union and does not assist but opposes it.

Therefore, whoever joins against God's law incurs two things: first, that they become one flesh, thus contracting a perpetual affinity that prohibits either of them from union with the relatives of the other, to avoid committing incest; second, because God does not assist this union, so much so that instead of incurring the obligation to serve each other in the act of the flesh, they sin as often as they mix further unless they unite themselves in the bond of marriage by true consent. Otherwise, they are not truly and legitimately one flesh concerning this consideration, but factually and secretly against the

Lord's will. However, they are legally considered one flesh because this adherence contracts perpetual affinity; and indeed, by the force and nature of the thing itself, they should lose the universal capability of marriage. But because it would be a grave danger if they were barred from marriages and forced to marry the harlot, it is therefore permitted by indulgence that anyone can marry another despite fornication; but not with the relatives of the other due to the contracted affinity, which endures in their regard, as canonical laws teach.

Great, therefore, is the power of that adherence in the words of the Lord: "He shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." I omit here the mystery, which the Blessed Apostle calls great in Christ and... the Church; for we will consider it in its proper place, with God's guidance.

Verse 25: And they were both naked, Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Rabbi Salomon says that "they were not ashamed because they did not know the way of shame to discern between good and evil; and although he was given the knowledge to name the animals, he was not given evil desire until they ate from the tree, and then evil desire entered into him, and they knew the difference between good and evil." Josephus believes that this lack of shame in the first parents occurred due to simplicity and a lack of knowledge, as in children who do not blush from nudity because they lack the use of reason.

However, we believe that Adam was full of all knowledge, especially of natural things, since he named all the animals; and therefore, it did not occur due to simplicity, but because of the condition of the state of innocence and the excellent gift of original justice with which the first parents were endowed by God.

Certainly, the gift of original justice is most manifestly present in the first parents in this passage, where two seemingly incompatible states are described: nudity and lack of shame. For nudity naturally produces shame in humans, as we now experience, being deprived of that justice. Indeed, in those parts, the lack of order and the absence of that restraint by which the flesh was subdued and controlled, preventing it from rising against the spirit, is most apparent. Even without being taught by others, humans, by some power of innate reason, recognize this indignity in themselves and are compelled to feel shame if those parts, which are rightly called shameful, are exposed. It seems to reveal a hidden turpitude and sin; for humans know this to be so, even if they do not understand why it is so. This knowledge deters humans from actions that would otherwise be licit and without sin; for the act of marriage cannot be performed publicly without the greatest impudence but must be done privately out of shame from the innate turpitude of the act itself. No one can be so shameless and impudent as to openly defy this natural instinct.

Therefore, when the first parents in that most blessed state recognized no cause for shame in their nudity, it was indeed because their nudity was miraculously covered by the gift of original justice. This could not have resulted from ignorance or lack of knowledge, as they were exceedingly wise; rather, it was due to the tranquility and perfect purity and innocence of the flesh, which, through that justice, was fully compliant with reason and in no way opposed to the spirit. Thus, although they were naked—not because they lacked clothing, but because they did not need clothing and were not dressed—they felt no shame. They were splendidly clothed with the beauty of that justice, which, had they preserved it perpetually, they would never have needed clothes either to cover their shame or to protect themselves from cold or inclement weather, as they would have suffered no harm or injury.

Since our discourse has reached this point, it seems worthwhile to discuss something about this gift of original justice, which the Wise man calls uprightness, saying: "God made man upright from the beginning," that is, endowed with original justice. And lest our discourse be too long, we must consider three things: what original justice is; secondly, in which part of the soul it is to be placed; thirdly, what its principal effect was.

Firstly, this gift of God was not grace that makes one pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*), or charity, but a grace freely given (*gratia gratis data*), separable from charity. We think this is proven from the following: for when the woman, either through the man or immediately from God, received the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as she herself testifies, saying: "God commanded us not to eat from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil," certainly when she ate the forbidden fruit, she transgressed the command and deprived herself of grace and charity; yet she did not lose the gift of original justice until after the man, having tasted the forbidden fruit, also transgressed the divine command. For the gift of original justice is most evident from the fact that, when they were naked, they were not ashamed. Therefore, when the woman, having already tasted the fruit, did not recognize her nudity nor felt ashamed, indeed having already lost grace and charity through the transgression of the command, the gift of original justice, though rightfully lost, nevertheless still persisted in fact. However, when the man also ate the fruit forbidden by God and offered by the woman, then both were deprived of that gift and realized they were naked and felt ashamed. Certainly, when they lost that gift, they were already deprived of grace and charity; for they lost it through eating: but grace by the internal act of giving consent, with the will already disordered and reason turned away from God, even before they ate or reached out to the forbidden fruit.

From this, it is clearly and evidently seen that original justice was not grace that makes one pleasing or charity, but a grace freely given, separable from charity and grace, since it is plainly seen that it persisted for a short time in those first parents, who, having been deprived of grace by perverse consent and the disorder of the will, persisted until the consummation of sin, already preconceived by consent.

Secondly: In which part of the soul this gift was placed. Some believe that this gift was located in the superior portion of the soul because it is called justice, of which the inferior part is devoid; for justice truly has the will as its subject. However, I believe it was located in the inferior portion of the soul. For the positive and the privative have the same subject. But that disease and the source of sin: that concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit: that body of death, which burdens and weighs down the mind and the inner man: that law of the members warring against the law of the mind, is certainly in the inferior portion of the soul. Therefore, the restraint of that concupiscence, that tranquility of the flesh, that holy law of the members, that peace of the flesh with the spirit, and that obedience of the exterior and sensory man to the interior and the mind, must be located in that portion.

And what gives me the greatest confidence in this matter is that when Adam was endowed with this gift from God, he received it for himself and for all his posterity. Therefore, if he had kept that most excellent gift, which he lost to his and all our great detriment, all his descendants would have been endowed with that gift by a natural, hereditary succession, receiving from their parents, from whom they were propagated and received their nature. However, those things which are located in the superior portion of the soul are not received from parents and progenitors by nature or hereditary succession, but they emanate immediately from God through creation and are infused into the mind and reason.

Justice is most rightly called such because it was a very straight and fair law and rule for the members and the inferior powers of the soul, by which the senses and all inferior powers were regulated so that they would not rise up or fight against reason, nor act or desire anything against the judgment of the mind and reason. But the mind and reason could happily govern them, finding them in no way rebellious, but easily and delightfully obedient, and could enjoy their most gratifying obedience. Now, however, due to their rebellion, it feels a grave loss and discomfort and the greatest sadness because those powers, having been unrestrained and deprived of such a very straight and fair law and rule, kick against the spirit and mind as unrestrained and indomitable, rise up and fight against it, and insolently assault it with continuous battles and all kinds of perverse passions. And we are unfortunate unless the grace of God through Jesus Christ delivers us from this body of death.

Thirdly, the effect of this justice must be considered. The chief and principal effect of this original justice, according to the opinion of many, was the ordination of the will towards God. This, however, does not seem sufficient to me; but I believe that the ordination of the will towards God was the effect of the grace that makes one pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*) and charity, as it is now. For, as it was also seen above, with the consent already given by the woman to the eating of the forbidden fruit, her will was undoubtedly already disordered and turned away from God; yet she did not lose original justice in fact, although she lost it in law, until the man also ate and they realized they were naked and felt ashamed. Therefore, before they lost original justice, they had already lost grace and had a will that was disordered and turned away from God, and tainted and corrupted by the stain of the gravest sin.

However, it should not be said that original justice could endure for some time without this principal effect; for just as now grace, whose property is to keep the will ordered and pleasing to God, cannot

coexist even for a moment with sin and the disorder of the will, so neither could that justice.

Therefore, since the ordination of the mind and will towards God was the gift of a higher and more excellent grace, namely, charity, which made the soul dear, pleasing, and friendly to God, we assert that the principal function of original justice was to render perfect tranquility and friendship between the senses and reason, restraining that law which in our members opposes the law of our mind, and ensuring that passions would not arise or fight against reason. For in that state there would have been no anger and sorrow, shame and fear, or tedium with dread, nor anything that would cause affliction.

Therefore, perfect tranquility in the soul with regard to all its powers was the principal and chief effect of original justice, so that the senses and lower powers would not incline towards their delights against or beyond the judgment of the superior portion and the law of right reason and the prescribed limits. Or, if the appetite inclined towards some delightful object, to which it was naturally inclined, it could be delightfully withdrawn from it by the mind and reason without any difficulty on the part of the superior portion or sadness on the part of the inferior portion; for the senses and lower powers, from this gift of original justice, would delightfully obey the mind and reason and would delight in the law of God according to the inner man.

There is another effect of original justice, also principal and peculiar; namely, the immortality of the body, which man would have possessed through it, so that, though naturally mortal, he would never taste death by its gift. Not that it would grant him the impossibility of dying, but the power of not dying; this clothed man with perpetual solidity, so that he would never be wearied by any infirmity, anxiety, or the fatigue and weakness of old age. For it preserved the body from the intemperance of humors, which, along

with the elements' virtues and mutual actions, it tempered with a marvelous proportion and the most even and placid temperance. Hence, all infirmities were kept far away, and through the aliment of the tree of life, it so renewed the natural virtues of the radical moisture, lost and consumed by the natural heat's virtue, that his vigor would never be diminished, nor would he suffer from hunger or thirst, nor be wearied by the weakness of the body, nor burdened by the fatigue of old age. Through this, he would have always enjoyed the most delightful place of the earthly paradise and its abundance of all kinds of delights; and by God's most vigilant providence and the diligent and most prudent custody of angels, he would have always been secure in all his ways, so that death would not be inflicted on him by any external injury. Hence, with the gift of immortality, he would have always lived happily and joyfully, never subjected to any misery or calamity, full of all felicity. These things about original justice are sufficient.

Chapter Three

Verse 1: But the serpent was more cunning than all the animals of the earth, which the Lord God had made.

Our interpreter translates: "More cunning," the Septuagint translates: Ὁ δὲ ὄφις (ἦν) φρονιμώτατος (ho de ophis (ēn) phronimōtatos) - "But the serpent was most prudent." Theodotion and Aquila, however, translate as: "versipellis" (crafty). The Hebrew word: עָרוֹם ('arom), signifies cunning and astute and wise.

The Chaldean interpreter uses the same word: עָרוֹם ('arom); although some codices have חָכִים (hakim), which means wise.

According to the opinion of all commentators, including Hebrews, the serpent here must not only be understood as an animal, nor solely as Satan; but as Satan speaking through the animal serpent. Not only an animal; because it was conversing with the woman, which pertains to rational and intellectual natures, not brutes. Those who assert that it was only Satan are refuted by Aben Ezra, who says that "they did not consider the end of the chapter; for how does Satan go on his belly? And how does he eat dust? And what is the reason for cursing: She, or he, will crush your head?" Therefore, he, according to the opinion of Rabbis Saadia Gaon, Rabbi Samuel ben Hofni, and Rabbi Solomon of Spain, holds that it was not the serpent speaking, nor the donkey, but an angel speaking through them.

For a clearer understanding of this passage, we deemed it worthwhile to first write down some things about the nature of this tempter, according to which he is an angel; and about the fall, according to which he is called a cunning serpent and a crafty tempter. Since we often find in Sacred Scripture certain spiritual substances, which we frequently call angels, we must steadfastly

hold that they were created from the beginning by the Creator of all things.

An angel, as Damascene states, is an incorporeal, intellectual substance, always mobile, free in will, serving God, and receiving immortality by grace, not by nature. In these words, we can perceive the angel's substance as free from a body, its power in understanding, working, and commanding, its office in the service of God, and finally its endless permanence from the gratuitous gift of God.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, speaking of the angel, describes its nature to us in this way: "An angel is the image of God and the declaration of hidden light, and a pure, most bright, unspotted, immaculate, uncontaminated mirror, receiving in itself, if it is permissible to say, the beauty of the form and the divine figure, and in itself sincerely, as much as possible, expressing the goodness of that most secret silence."

In these words, he wonderfully declares the angelic nature, that is, an intellectual nature in its purity as if it were a radiance surrounded by divine light, declaring intelligibly to intellectual souls the depths of that light, and the divine sun most clearly reflecting in the angel as in a most pure mirror. In the first, full, and most perfect degree, without any defect, he possesses a participation in the divine light, goodness, and beauty; so that he is a most translucent splendor of divine glory and the most perfect image and likeness of God; the character of divine goodness, form, figure, and beauty is all the more beautiful and excellent in him because his nature is more subtle.

All this vast multitude of spiritual and intellectual substances received most munificently from the Creator of all things from the beginning of their condition: God placed them in the empyrean heaven, the most eminent and dignified place of all, which He created with them from the beginning, like the most splendid and

translucent stars of that highest heaven. For thus they are called by God, as we read: "Where were you when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" They are indeed called stars, both because of the excellence of their incorruptible nature, the eminence of their place, and the splendor of the most brilliant intellectual light, by which they purify, illuminate, and perfect those below them; they are called morning stars because they were created from the beginning; they praised God because they knew their Creator, although not yet, as they were known, face to face; for the sons of God aimed for this because of the supernatural gifts with which they were wonderfully adorned.

For they had the clearest faith, since the kingdom of heaven was promised to them if they remained steadfast in justice and truth; hope, that they might strive towards the faithful and blessed promises; charity, that they might love the highest good with all their strength and effort of mind above all things. They were jubilant because, although they were not blessed from the beginning, they strove for beatitude, which consists in the clear vision of God face to face, from which is the fruition to which they were created, yet they were happy and blessed with a certain natural beatitude. For they possessed a certain state of innocence and impassibility, perfect, in which there was no harm of punishment nor evil of guilt: full and abundant with all kinds of spiritual delights, though short of beatitude: decorated with many and great supernatural gifts to know and understand all things promptly and clearly.

Among these happy spirits was Lucifer, the beginning of the ways of God, like the sun among the stars, having been assigned the first and highest place above all, in which all the gifts of God shone more perfectly and brightly. Concerning him, it is said through Ezekiel in the person of the king of Tyre: "You were the seal of likeness, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty; you were in the delights of the paradise of God, every precious stone was your covering: sardius,

topaz... jasper, chrysolite and onyx and beryl, sapphire and carbuncle and emerald; the gold of your workmanship and your settings were prepared on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers,... you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire."

In this passage, it is noteworthy that Lucifer was called the seal of divine likeness by antonomasia, because the divine image shone more clearly and perfectly in him. Furthermore, he mentioned nine types of stones because, indeed, there are nine orders of angels, which Lucifer had as if they were a garment for his adornment, and while he transcended their brightness, he was brighter by comparison with them. Hence, elsewhere, the same prophet, hinting at his excellence above all others, said about him in the person of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt: "The cedars in the paradise of God were not higher than he; the fir trees did not match his top, and the plane trees were not equal to his boughs; every tree in the paradise of God was not like him, nor his beauty. For I made him beautiful with many and dense branches, and all the trees of delight, which were in the paradise of God, envied him."

Therefore, since all the angels in that most delightful paradise above, namely in the empyrean heaven, were enjoying the utmost natural happiness and beatitude short of supernatural beatitude, and were striving towards the supernatural, it is entirely reasonable and in accordance with reason that they received some commandment in order to merit supernatural beatitude. For it does not seem fitting in any way that, without any law and without the fulfillment of any commandment, that beatitude, which is the highest reward and prize, was proposed to them; but just as man received a commandment from God by God's good pleasure, so that through its observance he might attain the happiness and beatitude to which he was created and ordained, which is beyond the powers of nature: so also must we think about the angels; so that they might also know that they were

subject to God. It is also entirely credible that, beyond what nature dictated, they had some commandment exceeding the limits of natural law; but which consisted in the good pleasure of God, so that they might acquire supernatural happiness in a fitting manner, which similarly is held by the good pleasure of God.

However, what this commandment was or what it entailed, no human can ascertain, since it is beyond nature and stems from the pure good pleasure of God. Nonetheless, I would most probably believe that it was the adoration of human nature in Christ, as God revealed to them that He would, in His immense manner according to His omnipotence, communicate Himself to the human creature and assume it, so that it would be exalted in God and, as if by a certain marvelous grafting, become God subsisting in the Word, and He presented His Son Jesus Christ to them in the form and figure of a man; and then finally commanded and promulgated the law that they should adore Him, in whom He was always well pleased above all, although He was to become man, yet they should adore Him as God, because of the hypostasis of the Word, and render to Him the obedience and honors due to God. Whosoever obeyed this command would always be happy and attain eternal supernatural beatitude; but those who did not acquiesce to this command of God would be cast down and thrust from that highest place into eternal darkness.

Nor should anyone think that what we have said here is without testimony from Scripture. For David, speaking of the kingdom of Christ, says in the voice of God: "And let all His angels adore Him"; as the Apostle also says: "And again, when He brings His Firstborn into the world, He says: 'And let all the angels of God adore Him.'" And this perhaps is the eternal life that the Apostle, writing to Titus, says was promised before secular or eternal times. For there was no one before secular times to whom God could promise eternal life, which is through Christ, except the angels, who, having been created

at the first moment of time, are said to be almost before secular times.

Therefore, the angels themselves, who alone were found capable of the promise before secular times, heard this decree, that salvation and eternal life were destined for them through Jesus Christ, if they were willing to receive Him as God to be adored willingly and obediently. And the most holy Michael, without any hesitation, received God's command immediately, as was fitting; similarly Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel, and many of the greater ones, followed by innumerable hosts of angels.

But Lucifer, marveling at the matter, began to consider that it was very harsh, not sufficiently just, but unworthy and unjust for God to make this decision, believing instead that this dignity should be attributed to an angel, whose nature, in all its vastness, is much more sublime than that of man, and much more to the highest order of angels, which is the most excellent of all. Then, looking at himself and contemplating his beauty, form, and elegance, and the high gifts and the excellence of power and might by which he surpassed all others as the sun among the stars, he began to desire that God should unite His hypostasis to his own, which he saw as the most excellent of all the angels; and he began to intensely desire for himself the likeness of God and the seat at the right hand of God's throne and the exaltation above all the stars of heaven, which God had decreed in His eternity to bestow upon Jesus Christ. Thus, revealing this thought of his, Isaiah expressed these words of Satan: "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will exalt my throne; I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." For he saw that it was possible to become God in this way, if the divine nature were united to his hypostasis.

While Lucifer was thinking these things, his intellect was gradually obscured and his will was simultaneously corrupted by anger and indignation. He began to envy this dignity granted to man and to intensely hate Christ, whom he would have wished to kill and destroy entirely. Hence, the Lord said, speaking to the Jews: "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and did not stand in the truth. You seek to kill me." Thus, through a certain kind of spiritual contention and proclamation, that great battle in heaven occurred, when Michael, who defended God's cause, and his angels fought against the dragon, and Lucifer, who from the most beautiful angel had become the most hideous dragon because of his sin, fought, and his angels who never wanted to accept God's command or approve of the right, but blasphemed and imputed unrighteousness to God. But they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them any longer in heaven; and the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan.

Therefore, Lucifer, having greatly abused the riches of God's goodness and patience, was cast out of the paradise of God, driven by the spurs of the most venomous envy and deadly hatred towards man. The wisest and most prudent in doing evil, crafty, cunning, deceitful, and wicked, the enemy of the human race, began to make a great effort to bring death to man with his deadly and pestilential venom, and to reduce him, expelled from the delights of paradise, into his power.

Moses declares this to us with these words: "But the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field." The one who was first created by God as the most beautiful angel, became through his own transgression the most hideous and venomous serpent: coming to tempt man, he entered one of the serpents of the earth, into which God permitted him to enter, so that he might exercise his wiles in it, with which he had some compatibility and analogy.

The serpent, however, is called נחש (nachash) in Hebrew, which word not only signifies the animal serpent but also an augur, a soothsayer, a deceiver, a tempter, and an inquirer into secrets. Perhaps for this reason, Moses used this word to wisely show us in one term both Satan the tempter and the animal serpent, in which he deceitfully spoke and exercised his wiles. This serpent is called cunning by the Hebrew word ערום (arom), from the verb ערם (aram), which signifies to ingeniously devise something with craftiness, to plot evil plans, to act cunningly and shrewdly, and to handle something wickedly. Additionally, this word means nakedness, which gives us to understand how this ancient serpent and most deceitful tempter, now stripped and deprived of all heavenly gifts, full of envy, armed with all cunning and craftiness and wicked thoughts, attacked man to cast him down from that happiness and to strip him of all heavenly good.

Also, because the serpent possesses some natural prudence and craftiness, for the Lord also said: "Be as prudent as serpents and as simple as doves"; therefore, so that the analogy between the tempter demon and the instrument he was to use for tempting might be appropriate, he entered the serpent, filling the serpent with his spirit.

However, it should not be thought that the devil chose the serpent through which to tempt of his own accord; but when he wished to deceive, he could not do so except through the animal he was permitted to use. For although he possesses the will to harm on his own, the power is from God: and the serpent was not given the state in which it could touch man in any manner or harm him, whether internally in the soul or externally in the body. For although, due to its higher and much more powerful nature, it had much greater force, to which the human body could not resist, and therefore could have greatly harmed and tormented him, as it now appears in those whom he oppresses and torments in astonishing and miserable ways, even without God permitting him to harm according to his own will

and rage; yet the devil was restrained from exercising that power he naturally possessed against them. Therefore, he does not attack man to deceive him by force, to compel him to consent, nor does he inwardly move the lower powers, either by illicitly exciting the sensitive appetite, or by proposing something illicit to the intellect through the force of phantasms, for nothing disordered could happen to man's lower powers unless reason was first disordered; but by presenting in the visible form of the serpent outwardly to the senses, the cunning deceiver attacked man, thus speaking to the woman:

Who said to the woman, "Why did God command you not to eat from any tree in the paradise?"

In Hebrew: "Indeed, has God said: 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

The Chaldean Paraphrast: "In truth, because He said, etc."

The Septuagint: "Why is it that God said?"

Some interpret the phrase אִפְּכִי (aph ki) as "all the more," meaning "how much more." Rabbi Solomon explains it as שָׁמָּה, meaning "why," or "for what reason did He say to you." Aben Ezra, however, states that "this teaches that he spoke other words and said at the end: קַל וְחֹמֶר (qal vachomer), light and heavy, because he said to you: 'You shall not eat, etc.'; and the serpent does not mention the glorious and terrible name," namely the Tetragrammaton, "because he does not know it." Many Hebrews have accepted this interpretation.

We, however, interpret it as follows: He who spoke to the woman: Satan articulated words to the woman, moving the tongue of that animal serpent with Hebrew words, just as even now he speaks through fanatics and possessed persons. He thus addressed the woman: "Why did God command you not to eat from any tree in the

paradise?" Many Hebrews and Rabbi Solomon say that "the serpent saw them eating from the other fruits and magnified the words so that she would respond to him and come to talk about that tree, as came about from the woman's response."

What a deadly venom this most virulent serpent injected into the mind of the woman with these words! For at these words, the woman began to silently inquire within herself about that commandment, thinking about the reason, and wondering why God had forbidden them to eat from the fruits of that tree. This is a very dangerous matter that easily leads to sin. For the mind, by its very nature desirous of freedom, considering itself bound by a commandment, resists; and thus, seeking the reason for the commandment and not knowing it, the woman could not find one to give to the serpent, since that commandment was of such a kind that neither reason nor utility appeared, but only the bare good pleasure of the one commanding. She began to think that the commandment was neither just nor reasonable and to dislike a commandment whose reason she could not find nor utility she could perceive, her mind's desire for freedom also resisting. Truly the serpent, who with his mouth injected such venom: "Why did God command you?" And to more easily persuade the transgression of that commandment, he chose first to approach only the woman, whom he hoped to overcome more easily as less firm and robust: afterwards, using her once conquered to more conveniently overcome the man. Since he himself is a liar and the father of lies, he began his work with a lie, saying: "Why did God command you not to eat from any tree in the paradise?" For God had said: "From every tree of the paradise you may eat; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat."

But let us examine the Hebrew text more closely and scrutinize it: for perhaps it will show us something more secret. For it reads, as we said: "Indeed, has God said: 'You shall not eat from any tree of

the garden'?" Clearly, this text seems to suggest that the serpent had previously spoken something: for it is in no way consistent for this to have been the beginning of his words; for the word (כי), "because," gives the reason for what was said before. Therefore, the Scripture shows that the serpent had previously spoken these or similar words to the woman: "God does not love you, nor does He esteem you highly; but He hates and despises you, although you are nobler than all other creatures, since He has not placed you in the highest rank of dignity, as is fitting and appropriate to your excellence and the dignity of your nature." When the woman wondered at these words and did not entirely accept them, the serpent then, giving the reason for his statement, said: "Indeed, because He said to you: 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden,' I truly understand that what I have already told you is true." Or, as the Chaldean Paraphrast has it: "In truth, it is so, because He has forbidden you to eat from any tree of the garden, depriving you of the liberty naturally due to you, since you are endowed with an excellent and noble spirit."

“This addition should not seem strange or less appropriate to anyone, both because the word: אַף (af), always adds something beyond what is said, and because it is the custom of Sacred Scripture to make the beginning of the words understood from their end; as can be seen also with the spies whom Joshua sent, who said to that woman: 'Because the Lord has given all the land into our hands, and also all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us.' For it is not right that this was [the beginning] of their words," which they spoke to her, because the word: כִּי (ki), gives the reason for what was previously said; “and truly Scripture makes the beginning known from the end.”

Craftily, the deceitful and most cunning serpent diminished the force of the commandment; for he did not say, "Indeed, because God commanded," but rather, "Because God said." He claimed that God had spoken, not commanded. He also omitted that glorious and tremendous name, the Tetragrammaton; he did not say, "The Lord God," but "God," both to avoid evoking the proper fear due to that most holy name, and to avoid seeming to have given the reason for what he inquired. For, if God is our Lord, they could certainly have responded that He rightly commands us this to show His dominion and to require our submission: it is entirely fitting that we worship Him as Lord and keep His commands, since He is our Lord and can most justly forbid this by His will and make it evil by His prohibition, even if it is naturally good; not because it is evil by nature, but because it is forbidden. Would that the woman had thus responded, instead of imprudently responding as she did, deceived by his words despite being simple and less instructed!

Verses 2-3: The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees in the paradise, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the paradise, God commanded us not to eat and not to touch it, lest perhaps we die."

Hebrew Text: "And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the paradise, God said, "You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest perhaps you die.'""

The Chaldean Interpreter has it the same; however, he translates "nor shall you touch it" as "nor shall you approach it, lest perhaps you die."

By this response, the woman indeed showed that she had given her ears and assent to the venomous colloquy of the cunning and

deceitful serpent. Moved by a certain elation of mind from the words of the deadly serpent, she was displeased that her free condition and nature, superior to all the trees, should be bound by a command regarding the tree forbidden by God; therefore, almost forgetting the divine power and dominion, she replied to the serpent, whom she ought to have despised, not recognizing God as her rightful Lord who could justly command whatever He wished. She said, "God," not "the Lord God"; nor "the command of God" imposed on her, but "the saying," following the serpent's persuasion; for she said, according to the Hebrew Truth: "God said," not "commanded." Then, showing that it displeased her as very harsh, not justly or reasonably commanded, she exaggerated it; for she said, "nor shall we touch it," which certainly God did not command; He forbade the eating, not the touching; but the woman added this from her own displeasure with the command. For anyone reporting a command imposed on them, which they do not much like, but rather shudder at, always seeks to exaggerate it, to show that it was neither fairly nor justly imposed. Unless we perhaps say that by forbidding to eat, God could be seen to have also forbidden to touch, because of the danger as something leading to the transgression of His command. However, this does not seem evident in the command that God gave them; but the woman exaggerated it as improper and less just; which can also be seen from the fact that she doubted the punishment for its transgression, when she said, "lest perhaps we die," whereas God had certainly said absolutely and not with any doubt: "In whatever hour you eat of it, you shall die." But because the command received from God displeased her due to the devil's suggestion, she deemed it improper and less just, and thus deceived, she doubted the punishment for its transgression. Seeing this, the serpent then added:

Verses 4-5: But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

Hebrew Text: "And the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die, for God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.'"

This phrase "like gods" can be translated as "like God"; for it is the same word as previously mentioned: "For God knows," אֱלֹהִים (Elohim); although the word itself is plural in form according to the force of the Hebrew idiom.

The Chaldean Paraphrast translates it: "It appears before the Lord that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like great sages discerning between good and evil."

Aben Ezra explains: "You will be like angels." Rabbi Solomon explains this passage thus: "He refutes up to: 'And you will not touch it'; and he said to her: 'Just as there is no death in touching it, so there is no death in eating it. For God knows, etc.: every artisan hates the children of his art. He ate from the tree and created the world. And you will be like gods, creators of worlds.'"

We, however, interpret this passage as follows. "You will not surely die." This liar and father of lies, who speaks from his own nature when he lies, proceeds by means of falsehood, as he began, making God, who is the highest and first truth and the author and origin of all truth, appear to be a liar. For God had most certainly threatened man with death if he should taste the forbidden tree, saying, "On the day you eat from it you will surely die." But this most deceitful one said, "You will not surely die." As soon as he saw the woman doubting the death that would follow from her response, he immediately asserted that it would in no way come to pass. He also attributed malignity and envy to the highest and infinite good, God, saying, "For God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

This most wicked tempter said, "God envies you, lest you should know those things that are most worthy of knowledge in the way that He knows them, lest you should be like gods to Him in knowledge and wisdom."

These words must be considered more closely to understand them more clearly and to perceive how falsely and deceitfully this ancient and most wicked serpent spoke. First, we should note that the tree, called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was not named so before the event, as many have thought, but after the event. For although we read, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat," when God prohibited it to man, I believe God did not use the same words when commanding as the prophet did when narrating the event; but God used some other mark to designate that tree. For when the woman responded to the questioning serpent, she did not say, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," but, "Of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the paradise, God commanded us not to eat." The prophet, however, after the event had taken place, used that mark, namely, the knowledge of good and evil, to explain which tree it was. For if God had used this mark when designating the tree, without a doubt, it would have helped the serpent's temptation and falsehood.

Nor was there any power in that tree to impart understanding, by which good and evil could be known, so it could not truly be called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: since it was entirely physical and could not act upon spiritual intellect. But the woman, deceived by the lying words of the tempter, who promised her knowledge from the eating of the forbidden tree, believed that the tree had some power to grant understanding. For when the serpent said, "Your eyes will be opened," it is not to be understood of the physical eyes, since they were already open while they were awake;

but of the eyes of the heart, which he indicated were not yet opened to understand good and evil by those words. "Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods": he did not promise them divine equality by these words; for he did not say, "You will be gods," which would have been manifestly false and entirely unbelievable, since it is impossible; but he asserted that a certain likeness to God in knowledge and wisdom would be obtained by eating of the tree. "You will be like gods, knowing good and evil": not that they were not already wise and instructed by God, through the law both of nature and grace, in the knowledge of good and evil: but because such knowledge is much more perfect in angels and most perfect in God, who is supreme truth; and for this reason, the devil sought to arouse in them an inordinate desire for the knowledge of those who knew more deeply and more perceptively and clearly understood and penetrated all things, even the most hidden. "You will be," he said, "like gods, knowing good and evil."

He used an ambiguous term: אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), which can be applied either to God or to angels; and thus: "You will be knowing good and evil, like God, or like angels," or certainly, as the Chaldean Interpreter very accurately translated: "You will be great sages discerning between good and evil, inquiring most wisely into all things both good and bad." He said, "You are content with your lot and the good things and gifts you have received: yet there are many things much greater, broader, and more excellent, which you neither have nor desire, because you do not know them, nor are the eyes of your mind open to see and understand them; nor do you know evil, since you do not perceive it, because God envies you, nor does He love you or esteem you highly; for He could have given you much greater, more valuable, and broader gifts, but He did not want to. He envies you also because He did not want you to know those things which are most worthy of knowledge in the way that He and the angels know them; nor did He want to share with you what it was of

no concern for Him to retain utterly; and lest you should be able to either know those greater goods which He denied and withheld from you, or the evils because of which He denied them to you—envy and malice and a bad disposition towards you—He forbade you to eat of the fruit of this tree, which has great power to understand good and evil, just as I also know, having eaten from it, and now tell you what I have learned through such eating. Furthermore, He maliciously and falsely threatened you with death lest you eat from it, to terrify you; He did this out of envy, knowing that on whatever day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like angels and intellectual beings, who know everything most perceptively, just as I do, knowing good and evil. It is not true at all that if you eat from it, you will die: for I, who have climbed this tree, have eaten from it many times, as I eat now—according to the opinion of the Hebrews—and I did not die; but through eating from this tree, I have attained great knowledge of good and evil, as you see I possess. Thus, neither will you die from eating in this manner: but you will gain the knowledge of good and evil."

These are the words that the wicked tempter and cunning serpent, always the most deceitful, spoke to the woman; by which the woman's mind was greatly inflamed to desire that higher kind of knowledge. For she believed the serpent's words, whence it follows:

Verse 6: So the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes and desirable for gaining wisdom, and she took some of its fruit and ate it, and she also gave some to her husband, who ate it.

Hebrew Text: And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was desirable to the eyes and desirable for gaining wisdom, and she took some of its fruit and ate it and also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate it.

Chaldean Interpreter: And desirable for gaining wisdom and she also gave some to her husband with her.

Septuagint: Καὶ ὥραϊδὸν ἐστὶ τοῦ κατανοῆσαι: And the tree was beautiful for understanding, or for gaining wisdom.

Rabbi Solomon explains this passage as follows:

"And the woman saw: she saw the words of the serpent and they pleased her, and she believed him, that it was good to be like gods, and that it was desirable to the eyes, as he had said to her: 'And your eyes will be opened'; and desirable for gaining wisdom, as he had said to her: 'Knowing good and evil.'"

Aben Ezra says: "The woman saw in her heart that the tree was desirable for its intelligence and the opening of the eyes. The meaning of 'with her' is that they ate together, and he revealed to her the serpent's secret. And behold, Adam was not ignorant, and therefore he was condemned. Many say that the tree of knowledge was a fig tree, because they find: 'And they sewed fig leaves together'; and if it were so, the Scripture would say: 'And they sewed leaves of the tree of knowledge.' Many also say that it was wheat. It seems right in my eyes that the two trees in the middle of the Garden of Eden were not in any other place on the whole earth, and one tree of knowledge generated the desire for sexual intercourse; therefore, Adam and his wife covered themselves."

We, however, interpret it as follows. The woman saw, not only with her bodily eyes, but also by a certain natural instinct, by which we deduce that foods coming from the earth are suitable for our nature and constitution, a knowledge we know is also given to other animals, that the tree was good for food; for indeed, the tree by nature was not evil, but certainly good: it was evil to man only insofar as it was forbidden by God, not because God deprived it of its natural goodness and sweetness. For it was truly pleasant to eat,

from which man should abstain only to acknowledge God's dominion and power over him and out of pure obedience to God's will; if he did not abstain, that tree, which was naturally good, would become harmful to man because of his own guilt. Furthermore, the tree was pleasing to the eyes: since man delights in food and drink, not only for their taste but also for their appearance. But in addition, it was desirable for gaining wisdom, or according to the Hebrew truth, desirable for understanding; this, however, is not true in itself, but according to the woman's estimation, who, deceived by the serpent's words, thought this of the tree and formed it in her mind as true. From the sweetness of its fruit and the beauty of its appearance, she convinced herself that what the serpent had told her was true.

Such is the power and energy of desire, that the woman, drawn away and enticed beyond the limits of reason, formed vain images for herself and preached and believed them to herself. She who had said that God commanded her not to touch the fruit of that tree, not only touched it but took it, that is, she picked it from the tree and ate it, thereby transgressing God's command, and induced her husband to eat as well: she gave it to her husband after she had eaten; for she persuaded and urged him to eat, and he ate. He did not believe the words of the tempter or think them true, nor was he deceived by the demon: as the Apostle testifies, the man was not deceived, but the woman was; but unable to resist the persuasion and urging of the woman, due to his excessive love, so as not to sadden her or let her depart without fulfilling her desire, he also ate.

Verse 7: And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Hebrew Text: And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra says that “the interpretation of יתפרו (they sewed) is known, and it is thus: 'I have sewn sackcloth over my skin'; seeking loincloths from worthless things, for they made for themselves what was necessary from a subtle wood. And after Adam ate from the tree of knowledge, he knew his wife; and this knowledge is a euphemism for sexual intercourse, and therefore it is called the tree of knowledge. Likewise, a young man, after he knows good and evil, begins to desire intercourse. The tree of life, because it adds life, and Adam lived many years. The term עולם (forever) is not the same as עד-עולם ועד (forever and ever); and thus: 'And they will serve him forever,' and 'he dwelt there forever,' and many other such phrases. And interpreters say about the verse: 'For on the day you eat of it you will surely die': that he was not created in such a way as to die; but when he sinned, death was decreed upon him. And many ask what his offspring sinned. And these are vain words, for the spirit of man and beast is one, who lives and rages in this world; and as the death of this one, so is the death of that one; except for the higher part, which is in man, by which he exceeds the beasts. And already a certain physician has come, raising reasons or demonstrations from a priori, that it is not fitting that Adam's life would not have ended.”

Rabbi Solomon: “And their eyes were opened: Scripture speaks of wisdom, not of vision literally: and the end of the chapter proves it. And they knew that they were naked: even a blind person knows how he is naked. But what is: 'And they knew that they were naked'? There was one commandment in their hand, and they were stripped of faith or fidelity.”

We, however, interpret it as follows. "And their eyes were opened": this is not to be understood of their bodily eyes, but of the eyes of the mind, which had been closed so that they would not recognize God's gifts, and especially that excellent gift of original justice, by which, although they were naked, they were not ashamed, being

adorned with its grace. But when this grace was taken away by the transgression of the divine command, they immediately recognized their nakedness and were greatly ashamed. For though they were naked, they did not recognize themselves as naked; if a person is naked and knows they are naked, they feel shame. Therefore, when they did not feel shame, they were indeed naked, but they did not recognize it; they were naked in body but not to shame; for that nakedness, due to that justice, did not produce its effect of providing an indecent spectacle, since through that justice, the wantonness of the flesh was restrained so that unbridled lust did not flourish in their members. However, with that gift lost, immediately the flesh began to rebel against the spirit and to lust against it, and the law of the members began to resist the law of the mind, and sinful desire began to flourish in the members, stirring up illicit and pernicious movements; hence they were filled with great shame and confusion, and to cover the members which were now shameful but previously were not, they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. For they began to experience intensely the shame and confusion of their nakedness, which they had not experienced before, nor did they know what shame and modesty were; but when they recognized this through sin, they sewed fig leaves together to cover the shameful parts, perhaps using some kind of reed or similar material. What a poor remedy these wretched ones applied to themselves! But they did it out of mere necessity for the time being, as no other solution offered itself at that moment.

In order to better understand what is said here, we need to clarify a few points. First: that original justice was not natural to man, nor were the gifts that accompanied it, which were lost along with it. For these cannot be called natural, as they do not come from the principles of nature, but from the gratuitous benefit of God and His external provision. Thus, they were in some way supernatural with respect to the body, although with respect to the innocent and

blameless soul, to which no unjust punishment was due, they were in some way demanded by the excellence and dignity of nature, to harmonize the body's copulation with such a soul, so that miserable contrition and unhappiness would not be found in such a great creature because of these two natures, the mortal body and the immortal soul, being opposed to each other; so that the corruptible body would not weigh down the soul, and through these gifts, the body would be subject to the soul, and the lower powers to reason. Therefore, these gifts were in some way owed to nature: especially and principally in that first parent, who was the first recipient and propagator of this nature; to us rather secondarily and in him and through him, as we all derive from that one. Thus, original justice and all that accompanied it were owed to human nature according to a certain reasoning in that first man. Since through that man all his descendants were to receive nature, it was entirely fitting that those goods, which in some way followed from nature to render it perfect and whole, would be received by his descendants through him. Therefore, the first man was adorned with these gifts, and he received them from God for himself and for his entire posterity, so that all propagated from him would inherit these gifts as a kind of hereditary succession.

Secondly, it must be considered that, since the aforementioned gifts were not natural, as those that come from the principles of nature, but were kindly bestowed by God as fitting for nature, whose works are perfect and who is above all pious, merciful, and good, it would certainly not have been good or fair for them to be conferred without any merit of gratitude. Therefore, God established a covenant with the first man, that through the obedience to a certain divine command proceeding from the free will of God, and the recognition of the subjection to divine power and dominion, the man might keep those gifts for himself and for us. God established such a covenant with man when He gave him that command, saying: "Of the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

The expression of this law and covenant must be rigorously considered according to the tenor of the words, as such covenants and statutes are by their nature strict. Firstly, because those gifts were primarily preserved in that first man for human nature in his descendants, God primarily made the covenant with that man and commanded him specifically, saying: "You shall not eat." Although this command was also enjoined upon the woman through him, since the covenant was primarily made with the man, if the woman alone had broken the covenant and transgressed the command, neither she nor human nature would have lost the bestowed gifts; only she herself would have lost grace, that heavenly gift that renders the soul pleasing and friendly to God and cannot coexist with sin. Conversely, if Adam alone had sinned, that transgression would have harmed Eve, his wife, and all his descendants, as they would have lost all the gifts; just as we truly lost them due to Adam's sin alone.

Nor should it be thought that humanity was subject to losing those gifts due to any sin of Adam, but specifically because of that act of eating. For he sinned before he ate by the interior act of consenting to transgress the commandment, as well as by the sin of pride and arrogance; and yet he did not recognize his nakedness, because he was not stripped of that original justice until after he ate, according to the word of the Lord God: "In the day that you eat of it." He did not say: "In the day that you sin you shall die," but: "In the day that you eat of it"; nor did they feel shame until both had eaten.

Thirdly, it must be especially considered that the effect of that primary transgression, namely the stripping away of original justice and the accompanying gifts, and the resulting shame, was not due to

the nature of that fruit or the act of eating itself; otherwise, the woman, who ate first, would have felt that shame and recognized her nakedness immediately. But she did not feel it until after Adam ate. Therefore, it did not happen due to the nature of the fruit; but from the force of the covenant that the Lord God had established with man, so that as soon as he broke that covenant and transgressed the commandment, he would lose all those gifts for himself and for all his descendants.

From that law and covenant which intervened between God and Adam, it resulted that through his sin and transgression the entire human race was destabilized. For he received those gifts from God by that covenant, so that by observing that commandment he would perpetually preserve them for himself and for us; but through transgression, he would irrevocably lose them for both himself and us, to our greatest loss, along with the guilt of perpetual punishment, to which the entire human race has always been subject by the force of propagation and generation. This guilt came to us, the children of Adam, from that law; just as a child born from adultery is irregular from birth, this irregularity comes from the law that establishes it. It was most fitting that, just as we would have received those gifts through the first man as if they were owed to nature, if he had kept the commandment, so also we would lose them through him, when he transgressed it; and just as through him we would be born as children of grace and adorned with every gift and divine favor, so now also through him we are born as children of wrath and stripped of all good.

As the gift of original justice was most clearly manifested in that, though they were naked, they were not ashamed; so now also, through the transgression of the commandment, it is clearly known to have been taken away; because when they had eaten from that tree, their eyes were immediately opened, and they realized they were naked, which they had not known before, or rather they did not

know the shame and confusion of nakedness: and their eyes were opened to recognize this, because they did indeed acknowledge their nakedness before, but were not ashamed; now, however, they felt shame and sewed fig leaves together to cover their private parts, so that they would not be overwhelmed by such great confusion and shame.

Verse 8: And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at the breeze of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Hebrew Text: And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden at the wind of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Chaldean Paraphrast: At the rest of the day.

Septuagint: Around evening.

Some Hebrews: At the breathing of the day.

The doctors of the Hebrews interpret this passage in different ways. Aben Ezra attributes this walking to the voice of God, as it is said: "His voice will walk like a serpent"; and: "The voice of the trumpet walking," etc. He also relates that Rabbi Jonah said that Adam himself was walking through the garden. Rabbi Solomon, however, refers it to God, who was walking in the garden. He also explains "at the wind of the day" to mean the wind, because the sun had set.

Rabbi Jonah: At the breathing of the day, that is, at the time when there is breathing and refreshment of the day, meaning the refreshment of the air. Rabbi David Kimchi says that it can also be explained as: at the blowing wind, that is, at the time when the day declines, when the wind blows.

We, however, interpret it as follows. "And when they heard the voice of the Lord God." It should not be understood that what is said here about the Lord God is according to His divinity. For God neither has a body from which He can emit the articulated sound of a voice through organs and instruments so that what He says can be understood by us; nor does He have feet with which He walks or a body to move from place to place; nor is He confined to a place so that He could be walking in a place where He was not before, as He encompasses and fills all places, so that His presence is everywhere. Therefore, this speaking and walking of God should not be understood according to the form of His divinity, but it is entirely credible that it was done in some created likeness representing God, and that in this form God spoke to the man through an angel; just as we read that He appeared and spoke to Abraham, Moses, and many others. Therefore, in this form and likeness, God walking through the paradise at the breeze of the afternoon, spoke to the man through an angel indeed, sensibly and externally with an articulated voice in an assumed body: but He also spoke by Himself inwardly in the mind through internal inspiration.

God came to them at the breeze of the afternoon, which signifies a light wind that usually blows gently when the sun is declining to refresh from the heat; hence it is rightly said in Hebrew: "At the wind of the day," or "at the breathing of the day," which, since it usually occurs when the day is declining, the Chaldean Interpreter translates as "at the rest of the day," and the Septuagint as "around evening" or "towards evening." For some believe that Adam's sin was committed around noon, at which time Christ was also lifted on the cross to take it away. Therefore, God came to them around evening and the decline of the day, when the sun of grace and divine light had already set for them, and they were now in the darkness of sin and miserable confusion. He came, however, with a gentle wind, because He was not coming in fury and vengeance, but with

thoughts of peace, to deliver them from the darkness of sin and to restore the divine light and lost grace.

But since a wounded conscience makes a man fearful, Adam, feeling the approach of Him whom he knew he had grievously offended, hid himself and his wife from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. This should not be understood of the true face of God, because no one can hide from Him: but from that likeness of His face in which God was accustomed to appear to him and speak through an angel. For they were hiding from the one whose approach they sensed. However, I most probably believe that He appeared to man in that form, with that gentle and peaceful spirit, in which He, most merciful and gracious, would come to redeem and save man. They heard the voice of God externally, calling them, and felt God internally in their consciences, reproving them and showing them the deserved punishments before their eyes and urging them to salutary repentance, so that imploring His mercy they might obtain it. They hid among the trees, that is, among the dense woods of the garden, seeking to escape Him who was sensibly coming to them. But the most merciful God pursued them, moved by compassion for them:

Verses 9-10: And the Lord God called Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God called Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" etc.

Seeing that the most merciful God saw man had plunged headlong into sin and wishing to lead him out of his sin, He spoke to him, saying: "Adam, where are you?" God did not ask out of ignorance, as if He did not know where Adam was, to whom all things are present; but so that Adam himself might consider where he was, in what state and condition he had cast himself, and into what

miserable fate he had plunged himself and his entire family and posterity, and thus be provoked to repentance, to acknowledge his guilt and confess it humbly, and so that from his response God might convict him of his sin. "Adam, where are you? Where are you, whom I, out of my infinite goodness, created so excellent and almost divine in nature: whom I visited with the greatest gifts and adornments: whom I made a little lower than the angels, and what do I say than the angels?—since I made you their companion and fellow-citizen—a little lower than God and set over all the works of my hands: under whose feet I subjected all things, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, which traverse the paths of the seas: whom I crowned with glory and honor and subjected to no other dominion but mine. Adam, where are you? How did you, when you were in honor, fail to understand, but subjected yourself to the dominion of the ancient serpent Lucifer? Where are the greatest gifts with which I adorned you? Who has stripped you of all those goods which I, out of my kindness, gave you? How have you compared yourself to beasts and become like them? Adam, where are you?"

It seems to me that by these words, God is summoning the man to present himself and account for his actions, so that the procedure of judgment may be noted, which should not pass sentence on the accused unless he has first been legitimately summoned, questioned, and convicted. The man, unable to account for his actions, moved away and hid himself, and being compelled to respond, not knowing where to turn, said: "I heard your voice, Lord, in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked."

He did not correctly understand the sense of God's words. For God asked him where he was, not because He did not know, but so that through this question the man might recognize his own state and humbly confess his error and seek forgiveness. Instead, he thought he was being asked about his location and responded that he was

hiding among the trees, trying to cover his nakedness as best he could, so as not to stand before God with the greatest shame of his nakedness.

Verse 11: And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Hebrew Text: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"

It still appears that God is urging the man to confess his sin so that he might merit forgiveness. "Who," He said, "told you that you were naked? For you were naked before and were not ashamed. What is it now that has caused you such great confusion and shame about your nakedness? What has opened your eyes to recognize yourself as naked with such shame and embarrassment? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? For this could not have happened to you otherwise. Have you, therefore, transgressed my command?"

This sense seems to be indicated by the Hebrew reading, as God seems to want to elicit a humble confession of his sin from Adam with His words; for He does not charge the sin as a fact, even though He knows it well; but He asks whether it was done by him. For He did not say, giving the reason for his nakedness: "Because you ate from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat"; but: "Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" He does not assert but asks, so that the man might confess his sin with his own mouth; through which confession he might merit to obtain forgiveness, and by acknowledging his guilt, he might humbly accept the penance imposed by God and submit to Him. From the beginning, how insistently God has demanded a humble confession of sins from man, and how wonderfully He delights in that kind of humility! The man responds to the divine interrogation, understanding what God requires.

Verse 12: And Adam said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

Hebrew Text: "The woman whom you gave to be with me."

Adam perceives what God is asking of him; however, he does not confess his sin honestly but instead offers a defense for himself and somewhat shifts the blame onto God. He says, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." First, he provides an excuse and a defense while admitting his guilt. "You, God," he says, "gave me the woman to be with me, to be a companion to me, of whom you yourself said: 'I will make him a helper comparable to him.' But she has become the cause of my downfall; for if she had not been, I would certainly not have sinned. For I ate of the fruit of the tree, of which you commanded me not to eat, and I sinned and acknowledge that I have sinned. However, I did not take the fruit myself, but she took the fruit and ate it and gave it to me to eat, and persuaded and compelled by her, I ate. Yet you gave her to me, for you said it was not good for me to be alone and without her; and now she has become to me the greatest harm and loss!"

Behold how, before honestly confessing his own guilt, he offers an excuse and defense and shifts the blame onto God as much as he can, blaming the one whose love previously led him to dare to transgress God's command so as not to sadden her.

But indeed, he lacks any valid excuse; for he ought to have obeyed God and kept His commandment, and not the woman: for he did not receive her from God as a mistress, but as a companion, a wife, and one subject to her husband. It is fitting to obey one's masters, not one's companions or subjects, over whom one ought rather to command; and if he was persuaded by her to eat, that sin also reflects upon him, who allowed himself to be persuaded by her, when he could and should have acted otherwise, and rather reproved

and corrected her than listened to her. Nor should he ever, to avoid grieving the woman, grieve the Holy Spirit; and if he now accuses her as guilty, he ought first to have corrected her and, when she sinned, rebuked her: indeed, he should have restrained her from eating. For she should not have been so dear and beloved to him that, to avoid grieving her, he would allow her to sin against the Lord God and, for her sake, commit the same crime himself. Therefore, he is a participant in her crime not only by not preventing it, but also much more gravely by following her; wherefore, by excusing himself for the sin, he rather wraps himself in more sins and heaps sin upon sin.

All these things God could have reproached this miserable man for most sharply, especially that he had aspired to the likeness of God, raised up by Luciferian arrogance. But God, merciful and gracious, restrained by the great spirit of His mercy, spared him, lest one already agitated by the guilt of his crime and the shame of his nakedness and the fear of punishment, if anything more terrifying were added by the voice of God, should be driven headlong into despair and say: "My iniquity is greater than that I might deserve pardon!" Also, because, although he did not fully confess his sin as he ought, yet his partial confession in his response mitigated his guilt to some extent: though it did not remove it, but still provided reason for pressing the reproofs; therefore, He had enough of a response from him and turned His speech to the woman.

Verse 13: And the Lord God said to the woman, "Why have you done this?" She replied, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Hebrew Text: And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Chaldean Interpreter: "He caused me to err."

Septuagint: Ὁ ὄφις ἠπάτησέ με: "The serpent deceived me," as our edition has it.

God does not ask if the deed was done, as He knows the fact, but why it was done: "Why have you done this?" He said, "You heard the man transferring the blame to you and attributing everything to you, who was given to him as a helper, and thus made from his flesh and bones to comfort him: but by your sin, you have caused him great harm and miserable loss. Why have you done this? And why have you become the author of such great ignominy for both you and your husband?"

Terrified, the woman defends her sin and shifts the blame onto the serpent: "The serpent deceived me," she said. Just as the man shifted the blame to the woman, saying: "The woman gave me the fruit, and I ate"; so the woman, finding no escape, admits the deed but transfers the blame to the serpent: "That evil beast brought this fall upon us, its pernicious advice led us into this confusion: it deceived me, and I ate." She does not say it forced her, but deceived her. Nor does the man say he was forced, but: "The woman gave me the fruit, and I ate"; she gave it, she did not force him, nor did she use violence; similarly, the woman says: "It deceived me," not forced me; nowhere is there necessity and violence, but will and choice. The enemy of our salvation used the work of this evil beast, gave advice, and deceived, but did not use force or compulsion, only by pernicious counsel did he complete his deceitful work.

God, although He could have sharply rebuked and reproached the woman for her response, was content with her words and did not compel more from her. After discovering the author of the evil, He turns to the serpent and pronounces punishment upon it.

Verses 14-15: And the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed above all animals and beasts of the field: on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

Hebrew Text: "Cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field: on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The Chaldean translation has it similarly, except: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your son and her son; he will remember what you did to him from the beginning, and you will observe him until the end."

The Jerusalem Targum refers this passage to the days of the Messiah king.

For a clearer understanding of this passage, we must observe what we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter: namely, that by the serpent we should understand not only the animal but also the devil; both the devil, who spoke through the serpent and used it as a means to tempt, and the serpent itself as an instrument through which his evil was carried out. Therefore, when we read here that God imposed these punishments on the serpent, we must understand that the punishment was directed at both. And just as we understand the devil through the animal serpent due to a certain proportion and analogy between them, so also we must examine the sensible punishments inflicted on the sensible serpent as similarly inflicted on the intellectual serpent, the devil; and all the more because the punishments here, even if truly inflicted on the animal serpent, were not primarily directed at the animal, but at the serpent, the devil.

And the Lord said to the serpent, that is, the devil: "Cursed are you." The Lord God, inquiring into this crime, began by questioning the man, then proceeded in the same manner to the woman, so that they, recognizing their sin and giving answers to God, might confess their guilt and receive pardon; for indeed, their sin was forgivable and could be atoned for by repentance and humble confession, which they should have done as they were able. They were granted an acceptable time and a day of salvation to bear worthy fruits of repentance. After God learned from the woman who was the principal author of her sin, when He came to the serpent, He did not deign to hear a response from him but immediately pronounced punishment. The serpent did not come to judgment as a defendant who could defend himself; for, being hardened in sin, he was already irredeemable and condemned, declared as the eternal enemy, on whom nothing but affliction for his merits was considered.

Thus it is immediately said: "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all beasts of the field." When these words are directed and inflicted upon the sensible serpent, it should not seem strange that the Lord addresses a brute animal as if it understands what is said; for we also read elsewhere that God spoke to a fish in the book of Jonah: this type of speech signifies the expression of divine will through external effects. Or: "Cursed are you above all livestock and all beasts of the field." The serpent, an animal from which we are to draw an allegory of the devil, is clearly seen to be of this sort, cursed, that is, execrable and detestable, and to be shunned as an insidious creature to man, and venomous above all livestock and beasts of the field. Although the serpent is naturally execrable, it is appropriate to consider that this curse and execration increased upon it after the devil used its tongue to perpetrate such a great crime. For we not only hate those who harm us, but also the instruments by which they harm us. Just as a most grieving father, punishing the one who killed his beloved son, also destroys the

sword or weapon with which his son was killed, cutting and breaking it into many pieces; thus, "cursed are you above all beasts of the field."

Hence it may be observed that animals were not cursed before the sin; for if the serpent was cursed after the sin, and not only cursed but cursed above all the beasts of the field and livestock, these animals were certainly not cursed before the sin; but after the sin, they were cursed, as there is hardly any animal, whether livestock or beast, that cannot in some way cause harm to man. This way they fall under the curse, making them fearful to man, evil, and to be shunned and dreaded, especially the serpent above all.

But if he who served as an instrument experienced such great indignation, what kind of punishment was given to the devil? Much more truly is it said of him: "Because you have done this, you are cursed above all livestock and all beasts of the field." However, this is not to be understood as the final damnation of the devil, which is reserved for the last judgment, about which the Lord says: "Depart... into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels"; rather, it refers to the punishment by which he is to be avoided by us: "Cursed are you above all livestock and all beasts of the field, indeed above all."

There are many ferocious, untamed, and extremely savage animals and cruel and fierce beasts that are hostile to man and attack him: asps, basilisks, dragons, tigers, bears, rapacious wolves, lions, and many others are cursed to man and to be shunned, dreaded, and avoided as they can bring about his mortal end. But you, above all these, are cursed to man, much more to be execrated, detested, shunned, dreaded, avoided, and fled from, and all the more because you brought not only the destruction of bodily life through your venomous words and deadly potion, by which death entered into all mankind, but also made man guilty of eternal death and a slave to

sin, bringing about the destruction of spiritual life, which consists in grace and charity, with your deadly poison.

Therefore, man ought to execrate, detest, shun, and flee from you much more than the face of any venomous snake or the breath of the most pestilent dragon or the sight of a basilisk. These animals, with their poison, cause the loss of temporal life: but you, with your spiritual poison, cause the ruin of spiritual life, which is in grace and charity, and eternal life, which is in blessed glory, in the vision and fruition of the highest good. And if you were permitted at will, you would inflict much more cruel and atrocious pains, afflictions, and torments of temporal life, and bring about a much more terrible and savage destruction than any most savage and ferocious beast could ever inflict. Therefore, you are cursed to him, like the most cruel and atrocious roaring lion and fierce beast always circling, seeking whom you may devour: above all livestock and all beasts, however bloodthirsty. For all these, although much inferior in nature, are placed above you by this sentence, because they do what is natural to them, not out of vice, but out of the condition of nature, and infallibly keep their state in which I placed them. But you do whatever you do out of your vice; having fallen from that high state of unfading glory in which I placed you through your vice and sin, you have not preserved your principality; therefore, I now place them above you: "Cursed are you above all livestock and all beasts of the field."

Next follows: "On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life." The serpentine animal, which the devil used, clearly has this lot and condition by its very nature. Whether its nature was such as it is now seen before the curse was pronounced is not entirely clear and certain. The doctors of the Hebrews, as it is read in Yalkut and Rabbi Solomon also says, assert that the serpent indeed had feet before; but by this sentence of the Lord, they were cut off, so that it would no longer walk on its feet but on its belly. St.

John Chrysostom also seems to affirm this, that the serpent had a different form before this curse. The same is asserted by Jerome in the "Hebrew Questions." Others, however, think differently, as they consider that the serpent did not sin; why then is this punishment inflicted upon it? They think it ridiculous to suppose that the serpent had a different gait before the curse, as Moses clearly states that God created creeping animals from the beginning.

However, the opinion of the former seems much more probable to me. Even if the serpent did not sin but was merely used by the devil to perpetrate that execrable crime, the serpent also experienced such great indignation as a detestation and execration of that crime, in the same way that the Lord commanded that the beast, with which someone had committed that horrendous and nameless sin against the laws of nature, should be burned along with the offender.

Similarly, in Deuteronomy, it is commanded regarding a city that has turned away from the worship of God, not only that the people should be put to death, but also that the livestock should be killed and the possessions burned. Likewise, in 1 Samuel, regarding the Amalekites, due to a sin committed by their ancestors long before, it is commanded not only to kill the men but also the women, children, infants, cattle, and sheep, and everything that belonged to them. All these were commanded to instill detestation, execration, and horror of sin, so that with the sinners, those things used as instruments to perpetrate the sins would also be exterminated.

Therefore, what is surprising if similar punishments are inflicted on the serpent here, considering that the devil committed such a horrendous and execrable crime through it? This alteration in the nature of the serpent was made by God, who inflicted such a punishment upon it that would last for all time, serving as a spectacle for all future generations, so that the pestilent counsel might no longer be heard and no place be given to its deceitful snares. Thus, seeing that the instrument used by the devil

experienced such indignation, we may understand the punishments that God inflicted upon the devil, the principal author of that crime. Hence, we truly believe it is said of the serpent: "On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life."

To reveal his cunning and the deceitfulness of his thoughts, that all his actions are full of wickedness and fraud, it is said: "On your belly you shall go." By this, the heart of the devil is signified, in which he harbors the most wicked thoughts with all cunning and deceit and indulges in his most depraved desires for worldly allurements, into which he would draw everyone, turning them into his own sustenance, which becomes the substance of the one consuming it. Therefore, it is added: "And you shall eat dust all the days of your life," that is, earthly men who desire, love, and pursue earthly things more than heavenly things, over whom you will crawl with your belly or heart, through the infusion of wicked thoughts and the excitation of obscene concupiscence by the illicit movement of the sensitive appetite.

To better understand this passage, we must consider certain points. First, the word in Hebrew, which our interpreter has translated as "belly," can mean both belly and chest; therefore, the Septuagint included both, translating the single Hebrew word to express both meanings, as they believed Moses intended it for both. Since this sensible animal, in which the belly and chest are so closely connected that there is almost no distinction between the chest and the belly, is used to figure our invisible enemy; hence, by the chest, the impulses and thoughts of the mind, which thrive there, are understood; and by the belly, the carnal appetites and depraved and illicit movements of obscene concupiscence, which are felt there, nurtured there, and originate from there, are understood. Because our enemy creeps through these things to deceive those he wishes to ensnare, it is said: crawl with your chest or belly.

Secondly, it must be noted that, while the first humans were still innocent, the devil was never given the power to assault humans with internal temptations, whether by presenting illicit and obscene phantasms internally, by introducing wicked thoughts, or even by stirring up the desire of the flesh with illicit movements; but he could only present external objects of delight to their senses. Hence, when he first approached them to tempt them, he appeared in a sensible form. However, after he conquered them and, by the right of war and duel, made them subject to his power—for by whom a man is overcome, of him also is he made a servant—he had the power to assault them not only with external temptations but also with internal ones, so that he might present obscene phantasms to their internal senses, introduce wicked thoughts and perverse feelings, and also agitate carnal desire with illicit movements and kindle the fire of obscene lust. And this is what is meant here: "Upon your breast and belly you shall go": this power is granted to him.

And further: that he might eat that earth upon which he crawled with his breast and belly, that is, that he might devour those earthly men who are wise in earthly things, over whom he has crawled with his breast, that is, with wicked thoughts and the impetus of the mind, and with his belly, that is, with the allurements of luxury, and make them part of himself and his members.

And this is his punishment, that he may then have power over those who despise God's commandments; and although he conquered all in the first defeated man, he does not exercise his power over everyone, but only over the earth. For the earth yields to the serpent and receives the trace of his steps, and does not resist like a stone, upon which even if the serpent crawls, he leaves no mark, because it does not yield to him, but resists. So also wicked and unjust men, who despise God's commandments, are like the earth, since they allow the devil to crawl over them and yield to him, because they consent to his temptations and execute whatever evil he proposes to

them. Not so the just, who keep God's commandments, but they are like the firmest stones, upon which the heavenly building is constructed, built upon the first cornerstone, Christ. And although the devil crawls over them with his breast and belly according to the power he has received, which the just cannot avoid, that is, he introduces temptations of wicked thoughts and hurls the darts of lust, yet they resist him with the strength of their soul and do not yield to temptations but repel them; and no trace of the devil's steps is left because they consent to him in nothing. Therefore, the devil does not devour these, but the earth, which yields to him.

However, he does not always exercise this power, but all the days of his life. By which it should not in any way be thought that he will ever die, since he does not consist of a corporeal nature and is already destined for eternal punishments of everlasting fire, which is prepared for him and his angels; but it says: "All the days of your life," because he is said to live all the time he is permitted to dwell and roam under this murky air and seek whom he may devour, which is until the end of the world, before that final punishment of judgment, when he will be enclosed in eternal prison, as if in a tomb, and will no longer be allowed to roam and eat; hence it is rightly said that he finishes his life.

Before that occurs, he inflicts another scourge on him, saying: "I will put enmities between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; she will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel." Since, according to the Jerusalem Targum, this passage refers to the days of the Messiah, it seemed most fitting to us to interpret this passage concerning Christ. And first of all, that woman is designated here, who is the restorer of parents, the life-giver of posterity, the most worthy mother of the Son of God, chosen from eternal ages; foreknown by the highest and most exalted Father, prepared by the Son; foretold by the Patriarchs, predicted by the Prophets, preserved by the angels; a woman to be admired and

worthy of all honor, the Virgin, to whom the angel was sent: a virgin in body, a virgin in mind, a virgin by profession, a virgin in body and mind; the most holy woman, singularly admirable and more admirable than other women, miraculously blessed, who encompassed a man in her womb while remaining a virgin, a new thing which the Lord promised to do.

Now, however, he says he will put enmities between the serpent and this woman: "I will put enmities between you and the woman." "You have conquered one woman," he says, "and through her, you also obtained the man by your wicked deceit; now I establish another battle, in which you must overcome another woman if you wish to securely possess your spoil and extend this tyranny you acquired by your wiles. For she is altogether prepared to snatch the spoil from you and is courageously girded for the conflict, who did not fall in this first duel, nor lay under this common sin, nor was ever found under your power. Therefore, in the second duel, I choose her as one free and mistress of the field, so that she may be able to wrestle with you. With this new woman, preserved from all stain of sin, I wish you to engage in a new battle, to see if you can also overcome her."

However, such a duel is not ended in her; just as the first duel was not ended in the first woman, but you concluded it by defeating the man. Thus, this duel must be concluded in the man, the seed of this woman. And between your seed and her seed; she will crush your head, or as the Hebrew reading has it, he, that is, her seed, will crush your head. And both are correctly said; for this most holy woman crushed the serpent's head, who brought to nothing every suggestion of the evil one, both concerning the allurements of the flesh and the pride of the mind. And Christ, who is called the seed of this woman and the son of the handmaid of the Lord, since he was born of a virgin, not by human seed but conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and formed from her most pure virgin blood, broke the head of this twisted serpent; he took away his rule and dominion over men in

the world, cast him out of the world, and subjected him to the power of men, to whom he gave power over demons, so that they could trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. What does it mean to trample on the serpent, if not to crush his head?

The serpent, however, cannot lift himself up to the head but lies in wait for the heel: "And you," he says, "will lie in wait for her heel," or, according to the Hebrew: "You will crush his heel," or "you will bite him in the heel." This serpent could not crush the head of the seed of this woman, but only his heel. For this seed is Christ, and the head of Christ is God: against God, there is no power, no counsel, no wisdom. But he could crush his heel, that is, his flesh, in his passion with the cross and scourges, or rather bite it than crush it; for it is written: "You shall not break a bone of him"; but he bit him whom, after he was scourged, he delivered through his member Pilate to the Jews to be crucified.

But the son of this woman on the cross reminded Satan what he had done to him from the beginning because he defeated him on the cross and took away all his weapons, with which he had previously conquered, and seized the spoils that he had fraudulently taken at first, and he who first conquered on the tree, "was also to be conquered on the tree." Hence it seems to me that the Chaldean Paraphrast has most accurately translated this passage: "He," that is, the son of the woman, "will remember, or will remind you of what you did to him from the beginning, and you will lie in wait for him until the end." For the devil watched Christ at the end of his days, as the Jerusalem Targum has it, when he sentenced him to an ignominious death through his ministers; but Christ reminded him of what he had done to him from the beginning, who took away the sin committed by the first parents deceived by the devil's fraud, and who first conquered man on the tree and brought the whole human race under his power, was thus conquered by man on the tree of the cross

and brought under the power of men; since God came into the camp for man, clothed with human spoils; for this reason, all the demons, terrified and trembling, groaned, saying: "Woe to us! For there was not such exultation yesterday and the day before: woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these exalted gods? These are they who struck Egypt with every plague." Therefore, judgment was made in the world on the cross, and the prince of this world was cast out; and the strong man, armed, who was guarding his courtyard, and all the things he possessed were in peace, was overcome by Christ, the son of the woman, who was stronger than he, and took away all his weapons, in which he trusted, and seized and distributed his spoils, which he had acquired in the first victory through fraud and deceit.

Verse 16: To the woman he also said: "I will multiply your hardships and your conceptions; in pain you will bear children, and you will be under the power of your husband, and he will rule over you."

The Hebrew truth: To the woman he said: "Multiplying I will multiply your pain and your conception; in pain you will bear children, and to your husband will be your desire, and he will rule over you, or in you."

The Hebrew doctors, as Rabbi Abravanel reports, understand by hardships the anxiety in pregnancy; by conception, the anxiety of conception. He himself explains this multiplication thus, that before sin, that is, if she had not sinned, she would have had only one conception, that is, she would have conceived only once. And he gives the reason for this saying, that men would have always lived; and if they had begotten sons and daughters every day, the earth could not have sustained them. But after sin, because man became corruptible and mortal, divine wisdom determined that they should beget multiple times, so that if they died, they would not entirely perish.

The Chaldean Interpreter translates it this way: "And to your husband will be your appetite, and he will rule over you."

Some manuscripts have: "To the man will be the conversion."

The Septuagint translated: "I will multiply your sorrows and your groaning, and to your husband will be your conversion."

In Hebrew, however, תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ (teshuqatêch) means "your appetite" or "your desire." Thus, Rabbi Solomon and David Kimchi explain it. Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra explains מִשְׁמַעַתְךָ (mishma'atech) as "obedience," so the sense is: "and to your husband will be your obedience, and you will obey all that he commands you, because you are under his power, to do his will."

We interpret this passage as follows. "I will multiply your hardships." Our parents led a happy and almost blessed life in that most pleasant paradise of delight: they felt nothing troublesome, inconvenient, penal, painful, or burdensome. However, due to sin, they were deprived of that happiness, so that they were not, as before, entirely happy in every aspect, but miserable and pitiable because of the punishments inflicted on them by God for their committed crime. And since the woman sinned first, punishments are inflicted on her first by God, who says: "Multiplying I will multiply," that is, most certainly and infallibly I will multiply, nor will I ever regret it, "your hardships." In Hebrew, it is עֲצָבוֹן (itzavon), which signifies pain, sorrow, grief, disturbance, and labor; hence our interpreter rightly expressed the force of that word by "hardships," saying: "I will multiply your hardships"; for hardship signifies misery and calamity, weakness and laborious illness, burdensome and inescapable labor.

"And your conceptions." In Hebrew, it is הֶרֶוֹן (heron), which signifies conception and laborious pregnancy and the groaning and

anguish that a woman endures from conception until childbirth; therefore, the Septuagint translated it as "groaning."

"In pain, you will bear children." Most evidently, all women experience these things as a punishment for that sin; for if it had not intervened, they would indeed have conceived children without any shame and filth, and without any obscene delight, and they would have carried and given birth to the conceived offspring without any heaviness, labor, and hardship, and without pain. For just as the appetite of lust would not join the nature of both for conception, but the voluntary use of nature, so that it would not be corrupting the flesh by pleasure but loosening it by will: thus, for giving birth, not the groans of pain but such an impetus of nature would delightfully and gently relax the feminine viscera, and that joy which women feel in this state when they have given birth to children, because they no longer remember the pressure and hardships they endured in danger, because a man has been born into the world, would also be felt in childbirth if sin had not intervened when they were delivering the offspring.

"And you will be under the power of your husband," or "to your husband will be your desire, or appetite, and he will rule over you." Initially, the woman was given to man for comfort and delight, as a companion and helper like himself, free from servitude; but now she is placed under the power of her husband, so that the husband may rule over her and bring her under his authority. And since the one who is subject to another's dominion must execute his commands, keep his precepts, and comply with his will, so as not to do whatever she wishes but what he wills, to explore his will, to assent to it, and conform her own will to his; therefore it is said: "And to your husband will be your desire," so that you do not do whatever you will or desire, but refer your wishes and desires to your husband and do what he wills, comply with him, and obey him; because "he will rule over you," that is, I establish him as your lord over you and

wish that you always recognize his dominion over you and always consider that a man has been given to you as your lord; he will guide you, govern you, correct you, and chastise you when necessary, so that, without his dominion, you may not live fearlessly and freely and be carried away into precipices.

It can also be understood that "to your husband will be your desire" refers to the natural desire by which a woman desires a man for sustenance, defense, protection, companionship, security, and delights, from all of which a woman is somehow destitute and in need, just as the imperfect always desires the perfect from which it can be completed and its deficiencies supplied. However, the former explanation is more consonant with the letter, although this one is also very true.

It should be noted that it says "to your husband," not "to husbands," since it has always been most shameful and never allowed for one woman to be joined to several husbands at the same time: but a woman should have one proper husband, not many, contrary to those obscene and foolish heretics who wanted women to be common, which is a characteristic of beasts, not humans.

However, it must be understood how this general statement, which encompasses the entire sex, is to be comprehended. For many women seem to be exempt from these hardships, such as unmarried women, virgins, and the barren, who in no way conceive. Many are found to be barren: some indeed by nature, others by God's action; and some of these are for the glory of God, while others are for the punishment of some sin; and some are perpetually barren, while others are so for a time. Many are also barren not by nature but by grace, who in no way know men, nor do they ever wish to know them; but they vow their virginity to the Lord and keep it inviolate; hence it happens that they are not oppressed by the hardships expressed in this sentence of the Lord. But it must be understood

that whenever God generally establishes or decrees something, it must be understood to pertain to those who are capable of the thing established.

Therefore, when the Lord says to the woman: "I will multiply your hardships and your conceptions; in pain, you will bear children": it cannot pertain to those to whom nature has denied the power of conceiving; nor to girls who are still nubile; nor to those who do not know a man, nor have been made one flesh with any man: but they have adhered to Jesus Christ and have become one spirit with him; nor do they care for the things of a man, how they may please a man: but they are concerned with the things of the Lord, how they may please God and their true and eternal spouse, Jesus Christ.

However, all those we mentioned are not entirely free from female hardships; for indeed, those who are naturally barren suffer the greatest hardships precisely because they are barren. Barrenness is a greater evil in nature than being fertile with all those hardships; therefore, in the law, which followed the nature of things, barrenness was abominable and under a curse: as if a woman who was barren was marked and cursed by God. Hence, among the blessings of the people, this was also included: "There will be no one infertile or barren in your land."

Therefore, since barrenness is a great evil, it originated from sin in women and is often inflicted upon women due to sin; hence, in the primordial state, barrenness would have been nowhere present. However, the Lord did not wish to mention it as inflicted because of sin, because it pertains not to universal nature but to a particular condition. Thus, barren women are considered to be in a worse condition without the pains of childbirth than fertile women with all those hardships; for when a woman is in labor, she has sorrow, but when she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the

anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world. This joy is absent for the barren, and they bear a perpetual reproach.

Therefore, we read in Sacred Scripture about many women who were naturally fertile but became barren as a punishment for some sin: for example, Michal, the wife of David, who was made barren because she mocked her husband while he was dancing before the Ark of God; and the Lord also closed all the wombs of Abimelech's household because of his sin. Conversely, many women who were naturally barren were made fertile because of their outstanding virtues: as we read about Leah, who, when she was despised by her husband and by her sister, the Lord saw her humility, heard her, consoled her, and opened her womb, while her sister remained barren. Therefore, because of the great joy and immense consolation she felt from bearing sons, her barren sister envied her; until the Lord remembered her, heard her, and opened her womb: seeing this, she rejoiced greatly and said: "The Lord has taken away my disgrace."

Similarly, Sarah, the wife of Abraham, Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, by their virtues, earned the grace of conceiving and bearing children from the Lord, so that he might take away their reproach. However, all these women who received such grace from the Lord were not exempt from this decree of the Lord, but indeed bore children in pain: as Scripture clearly declares in the case of Rachel, who, when she was giving birth to her second son, began to be in peril due to the difficulty of the childbirth; thus, as her soul was departing because of the pain and imminent death, she named her son Benoni, that is, "son of my sorrow."

The virgins also, even though they are not entirely contained in that decree, since the Lord has raised them to a better condition, are not completely freed from all the troubles of women. Indeed, their spirit

is willing, but the flesh is weak and very frail; therefore, because they are virgins, it is necessary for them to endure many and severe sufferings. For the possession of virginity is serious, it is a great thing to control the body, to restrain the incontinence of the flesh, to oppose pleasures, to have a most grievous war daily that cannot be appeased, to always carry the enemy with them wherever they go, who neither allows rest in the evening, nor at night, nor at dawn, nor at midday: but always fights and subjects pleasure, bringing marriage to mind, to exclude virtue and insert fornication; whence they are burned every single day and hour, like a furnace ignited. Hence in this very truly, that enemy war is also held: I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; she shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for her heel; which, as we have explained of the Virgin, the glorious Mother of virgins, so also it is to be understood of those who follow her footsteps.

Truly, virginity is a most laborious and extremely serious task; such is virginity that none of the ancients could preserve it: it was even terrifying to the Prophets. Therefore, if women suffer severe hardships, labors, and pains in childbirth, these women endure much graver sufferings to preserve their virginal chastity. Only one woman was exempt from this decree, namely the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, the bridegroom of virgins. She was completely immune from all the evils of this decree, not by nature, but by an exceptional and singular grace; for she was always the purest virgin, a virgin in mind, a virgin by profession, a virgin in flesh, a virgin most holy in mind and body. Nor were those labors multiplied for her in maintaining her virginity, which other virgins experience, for she never had even the slightest obscene or impure thought, nor any thought in any way violating her virginal purity, nor did she ever feel any movement, even the slightest, of obscene desire. For her flesh was most pure and holy, formed by the hand of

God much more purely and excellently than the first woman in that state of most radiant innocence, where none of these things were experienced.

Furthermore, she was not only the purest virgin, but with the splendor of virginity, she was also a most fruitful woman, not in the number of offspring, but in excellence; for she did not have multiple conceptions, having only one, in whom ... the fullness of divinity dwells bodily, in whom all nations are blessed. Nor did she conceive by lust: but she, who was full of the grace of the Holy Spirit, also conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, who sanctified her in mind and body and took from her purest virginal blood from her virginal womb, and thence by the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High God, the Word of the eternal Father was ineffably conjoined there, and became flesh.

Moreover, she did not give birth to her Son in pain, but with the highest and ineffable joy, as is the steadfast faith of the universal Church. For the eternal Word of God the Father, Jesus Christ, made flesh in the womb of the Virgin, came forth from his mother's womb with her virginity sealed and intact, leaving no sign of his exit; therefore, his exit was called by Solomon in the Proverbs the way of a man in a virgin, which he himself said he completely did not understand due to the depth of the mystery. Thus, the Virgin Mary gave birth to a son, feeling no pain, always remaining a virgin before birth, during birth, and after birth.

Furthermore, she was never under the power of a man, nor did anyone have dominion over her; for her most holy husband Joseph was given to her not as a lord but as a servant, to serve the glorious Virgin as his mistress. For that most holy and consecrated marriage was not so that the most holy Virgin and most singular woman should be subject to a man in body or mind; nor to be his helpmate, who played no part in the conception: rather, he was made her

husband to be her help in childbirth, so that she might use his support. It is therefore clear that the most glorious Virgin was in no way encompassed by this decree.

Verses 17 – 19: And to Adam, he said: Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The Hebrew text differs slightly, as there: Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it and in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread; until you return to the ground, because from it you were taken.

The Chaldean Interpreter translates: Because you have listened to the words of your wife, cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it.

But the Septuagint translated: Cursed is the ground in your works; hence our Interpreter, imitating them, also translated it thus.

The reason for this diversity is that in Hebrew there are two very similar words: עָבוֹר ('avur), with the last letter ר (resh), and עָבוֹד ('avod), with the last letter ד (dalet); and the first, if it has the prefixed letter ב (bet), means "because of"; the second, if it has the same prefixed letter, is an infinitive, from the verb עָבַד ('avad), which means "to work"; and so the Septuagint and our Interpreter seem to have read: בַּעֲבוֹדָךְ (be'avodekha): In your work; however, in Hebrew, it is בַּעֲבוּרְךָ (ba'avurekha), that is, "because of you." For it is the letter ר (resh), and not ד (dalet), as even the Chaldean Interpreter translates: Cursed is the ground because of you.

Now let us approach the exposition of this passage. "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife." After God cursed the serpent, who was the principal author of this crime, and the woman, who was the intermediate cause, now He curses the man himself, in whom the sin was entirely consummated, and hurls five curses upon him, as Rabbi Abrabanel noted here. The first is: "Cursed is the ground because of you"; the second: "In toil or pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life"; the third: "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field"; the fourth: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread"; the fifth: "Until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." These curses must be explained one by one.

But before inflicting these curses upon him, He sets forth the reason why He inflicts them: "Because," He says, "you have listened to the voice of your wife," or, according to the Hebrew, "because you have obeyed the voice of your wife." "I," He says, "formed the woman to be a helpmate similar to you and gave her to you as a companion and wife, and made you her husband and head, so that not you to her, but she should always obey you, nor should she ever command: but you should have commanded her; for I did not set her over you or give her as a mistress, but set you over her. Now, however, you have perverted this entire order because you have obeyed the voice of your wife. But in what matter did you obey? You ate," He says, "from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat. I," He says, "am your God and Lord: you ought to have obeyed Me and observed My command. Now, however, neglecting Me and despising My command, you have obeyed the voice of your wife, whom you should in no way have obeyed, but rather you ought to have restrained her from what she was persuading you, and to have rebuked and corrected her. Now, however, I commanded you not to eat from this tree: she persuaded; but you obeyed her persuasion and

despised My command, who am your God and Lord; therefore, you will suffer the most deserved penalties and punishments for such a great crime."

"Cursed is the ground because of you, or for your sake." After God formed man adorned with the beauty of original justice and the brightest splendor of innocence, He placed him in the paradise of delight, so that he might enjoy it there. Now, however, due to sin, he condemned himself to be cast out from there, just as he was expelled and the ground upon which he would dwell was cursed: "Cursed," He says, "is the ground because of you"; not for the act of tilling the ground, but for the act of sinning the ground is cursed, as it is rightly said in Hebrew: "Cursed is the ground because of you," that is, because of your sin.

God had initially endowed the earth with a most fruitful power, so that it was very fertile and abundant, as it is said in the first chapter: "Let the earth bring forth green plants bearing seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit..." and so it was; and the earth brought forth green plants... and fruit trees bearing fruit; which happened without the labor and cultivation of man, as man did not yet exist. Thus, what the earth received in the beginning it would always have retained and would have brought forth the most abundant, sweetest, and most beautiful fruits without the heavy burden of cultivation or the smallest toil of man, except for pleasure and delight, as it is said: "God placed man in the paradise of delight, to work and keep it": which was done for the recreation of the mind. Now, however, as a punishment for sin, the earth is cursed, so that it does not produce those best herbs and sweet fruits without the utmost effort of men, heavy burdens, laborious cultivation, and painful toil; but if left uncultivated and not worked by the labor of men, it would produce no sweet and good fruits, no pleasant herbs suitable for man's food; but in their place, it would bring forth thorns and thistles, wild grapes, and brambles.

The first punishment inflicted upon man is this: that because of his sin, the ground is cursed, that is, the initial, most fruitful power and fertility is taken away from it, and it becomes sterile, deserted, and unfruitful, and all its growths, which it produces, are cursed, that is, to be execrated and detested by man, not for man's help or support, but as a punishment and torment.

"In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." This is the second punishment inflicted, whereby man is condemned and subjected to labors in order to receive from the earth the sustenance necessary for him; whereas, in paradise, he would have led a happy and almost blessed life, entirely free from all toil, all sadness, all pain, but abounding in all delights and pleasures. Indeed, God had placed man in the paradise of delight to work and keep it; but this was given to him for delight and pleasure, not for toil and affliction; therefore, there is no mention of pain or labor there, but of delights and pleasures. However, here: "In toil you shall eat of it." The Hebrew word here עֲצָבוֹן ('itsavon) signifies labor, fatigue, sadness, and pain, for this labor, which man must undertake to procure necessary sustenance, is not light, nor pleasant and agreeable, but onerous, heavy, and troublesome, with fatigue, sadness, and pain; nor is it brief or very short, but lasting and perpetual: "All the days of your life," He says; as long as you live, until death, you will never escape these labors.

"Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field." This is the third punishment of the curse inflicted, that the earth, not only because of sin, is deprived of that original, most fruitful and fertile power of abundant yields, so that it brings forth from itself only detestable and execrable growths for the punishment rather than the support of mankind, and only with the utmost labor cultivated and worked by men, does it bring forth the necessary yields for human life; but even with all these labors and burdens, it still produces thorns and thistles, brambles and wild vines

to afflict man: "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you," that is, for your affliction, annoyance, labor, and fatigue, to your inconvenience and detriment. For even if in the state of the first parents the earth had produced thorns and thistles, brambles and wild vines, burrs and thistles, rough shrubs, and whatever else brings harshness and are solid and sharply pricking, it would not have been to the injury and offense of humans. However, the intervening sin was the cause that the earth germinated such things to the inconvenience and detriment of humans. Therefore it is said: "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field"; because, as the Prophet says, "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts and became like them." To man, assimilated to beasts because of sin, as a punishment for his sin, the wild herbs of the fields, which were originally created as fodder for beasts, are now given to him as food, to indicate what was worthy of the sinful man, who made himself like senseless beasts: "And you shall eat the plants of the field."

But someone may say: what is this that is inflicted as a punishment for sin? Were not herbs also given as food when man was in the primordial state? For it is said: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed upon the earth and every tree that has seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food, and to all the beasts of the earth." It is true that herbs were given to man as food from the beginning; but not just any herbs, but the best ones: not those which were given to beasts as food, as we have noted above according to the Hebrew truth, which clearly distinguishes between the food of animals and that of humans. As we noted above, it is written: "Behold, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food; and to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything

that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food." See how clearly the kinds of food are distinguished for humans and beasts.

Now, however, the punishment inflicted upon man is of such a nature that the earth, even when worked and cultivated, does not produce those pleasant herbs and sweet fruits, which it would have produced even without labor and cultivation: but rather, it produces nearly wild, unpleasant, and insipid herbs, such as it would have originally germinated as fodder for feeding beasts; and therefore it is said: "You shall eat the plants of the field," or "the plants of the earth," which were established for the fodder of senseless beasts.

However, I do not believe this should be taken with such strictness as to mean that the herbs suitable for human consumption and the fruits of trees, which were given from the beginning, are prohibited. Rather, as we have already said, it should be understood to indicate what is worthy of a sinful man, and also because the herbs and fruits that people now eat are not of the same perfection, pleasure, and delight as those given originally: but are far inferior, so much so that the better and more excellent ones from then would compare to these current ones like the herbs that were given as fodder for animals. For those herbs were delightful and very pleasant in taste: the fruits, however, were most beautiful and sweet; now, however, the herbs we consume are insipid and unpleasant, needing many condiments so they do not cause nausea and their blandness does not make the taste completely insipid and bothersome.

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread," or "in the labor of your face you shall eat bread." In that most pleasant and delightful paradise, man would have eaten from every tree, except one, without any labor or affliction, but with all the delight of peaceful and pleasant rest, enjoying all those good things. But after sin, as a result of it, man is so subjected to labor that if he does not

work, he will not eat: "In the sweat of your face," He says, "you shall eat your bread." By "bread" we must understand not only that food which the word first implies, but all food and all nourishment; for the Hebrew word in this place is לֶחֶם (lechem), which signifies not only bread, though it does so primarily as the principal and main food of man, but also all food and anything that can be eaten; so that, as without that intervening sin, he would have enjoyed and partaken of all food and nourishment without any labor whatsoever, but with the greatest delight and pleasure; so, having committed it, no food is given to him for sustenance without pain and sorrow, labor and sweat.

However, this law is not so imposed on man as to bind each individual with its command, but it is a command given to man, that is, to the human race and the entirety of humanity, not to individuals. For there are many among humans who, either by age or by infirmity, are too weak to bear the burdens of physical exertion or to work with their hands; it cannot be said in any way that these are bound by this command, as there is no obligation for the impossible. Therefore, we must consider that this command was given not to individuals but to the entirety of humanity; what is commanded to the community does not necessarily pertain to each individual, but it is enough if many fulfill it as is appropriate. Thus, this command given to the human race is sufficiently fulfilled if it is carried out by those who are able to fulfill it and who are not excused from manual labor by any just reason, provided they are not engaged in better studies. Hence, a distinction must be maintained among various states and conditions of humans.

It is not fitting for princes and secular rulers and governors to labor with their hands, but they deserve to be supported by their subjects, for whose sake they undertake their care; therefore, the Apostle commanded that honor, taxes, and tributes be given to them, as they serve God in that ministry; and if they perform their office and

ministry worthily and fulfill it as is right, they are also worthy of eternal reward.

Those who are engaged in better studies, such as those who devote themselves to spiritual exercises day and night, reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, who meditate on the law of the Lord day and night and in whose law is their delight, if they do not labor with their hands, cannot rightly be reproved for this, because they are doing what is better and have chosen the best part with Mary. Therefore, those who reproach them and murmur against them and detract them with canine barking should be reproved rather than these engaged in such spiritual pursuits, as Martha was.

For among the Gentiles and the Hebrews, it was customary that those who meditate on the law of God day and night and have no part in the land, except only God, would be supported by the ministries of other people. Among the Egyptian priests, it was a law established by the king that provisions be provided for them, as we read in Genesis; and for the Levites, the Lord provided through tithes, because they served the Lord in the ministry of the Ark and the Tabernacle. And the Apostle always took the utmost care to send blessings, that is, alms, to Jerusalem for the use and support of the saints; because the faithful living there, having sold everything, laid the proceeds at the feet of the Apostles, so that they might be distributed to each as needed: and they maintained the highest poverty, which abounded in the riches of their simplicity, always engaging in spiritual exercises, devoting themselves to prayer, and serving the Lord in hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs. Therefore, the Apostle urged and requested all other faithful churches to assist them in their temporal needs, so that they might be helped by them in spiritual matters. For he writes to the Corinthians: "Your abundance may supply their lack..., and their abundance, in spiritual things, may supply your lack, so that there may be equality, as it is

written: 'The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.'"

Therefore, those who engage in better exercises, that is, spiritual and divine ones, are not bound to bodily exercises and human labor: such are monks and all those who are commonly called religious, because they minister to God in ecclesiastical service and spiritual exercises, in holy reading, contemplation, hymns, and psalms. And if to these, exhortation and preaching, care, and superintendence in governance are added, it is all the more right that they be provided with sustenance, so that they are not bound to labor with their hands, as the Apostle said: "The elders who rule well are worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine; for the Scripture says: 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and: 'The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel,' and 'those who serve at the altar should partake of the altar.'"

Therefore, heretics who, inflamed with virulent hatred against the Regulars, criticize them for idleness and reproach all those who do not labor with their own hands to provide for themselves, citing this passage and presenting the Apostle Paul, are speaking in vain. They argue that Paul commended manual labor highly and showed it by his own example, saying of himself: "We labor, working with our own hands"; and in the Acts of the Apostles: "These hands have ministered to my necessities..."; and he offered himself as an example, as he said: "We did not eat anyone's bread free of charge, but in toil and labor, working night and day..., that we might give ourselves as an example for you to imitate us." Thus, he instructed the Thessalonians, saying: "We urge you... to work with your own hands, as we commanded you"; and in another letter: "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

But these people misunderstand and abuse the very teaching of St. Paul that they cite. For even if St. Paul did not use the power to eat and drink and not work, lest he give any offense to the Gospel of Christ, he did not condemn those who did use it; rather, he could have used it without losing the grace of Christ. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he clearly states that, as an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, and in nearly all his letters, as St. Jerome declares against Vigilantius, he commands that everyone should contribute for the relief of the saints every first day of the week.

Nor in all those places that they cite does the Apostle command manual labor for everyone, but for those to whom the care and duty of attending to better studies is not imposed; he advises, however, that no one should be idle. We cannot deny that there are many who, although they have plenty and are not pressed by any lack, lead a life of curiosity, without any labor, being curious, pleasure-seeking, and doing absolutely nothing either spiritual, liberal, or mechanical: but rather are engaged in games, music, or any other vanities and devote all their effort to pursuits that pertain more to pleasure and luxury. But let us return to the Prophet.

"Until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." The Lord shows that man is subject to perpetual labors until death: "Until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken," or, according to the Hebrew, "because from the ground you were taken."

Rabbi Abrabanel refers this passage to the curse on the ground according to the interpretation of others, that is, that the ground was cursed as long as Adam lived; but after he died, it was no longer cursed as it had been during his life; as it is said of Noah: "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed." And after the flood, it is said: "I will never again curse the ground because of

man." And Aben Ezra says about the curse, "the ground was cursed because of the first man - and so it was that after his death, people ate from the fruits of the trees and prospered and grew strong in virtue - because of the consumption of the curses, which he received more than those who came after him, because he himself was sinning and transgressing the command of God and therefore it was fitting that he be punished more than his children and his descendants." He holds, however, that these words declare the duration of man's sorrow and labor, and that it is the fifth curse, namely death.

For man is naturally a debtor to the dissolution of death and the burden of corporeal flesh. Even if, without the intervention of sin, he would never have died, that would have been due to the gift of grace, not the condition of nature; for he was composed of contrary elements, which act upon and suffer from each other: therefore, they can corrupt themselves. Thus, by the condition of nature, nothing composed of them can be perpetual and immortal; hence it is said: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return," that is, you are formed from muddy dust and consist according to the flesh and not according to the soul, which has its origin from God in heaven, and therefore, since you are composed of dust according to the flesh, it is necessary for you to be resolved into dust. Therefore, death is natural to man according to the flesh, and if he had not sinned, he would not have died, because by the gratuitous benefit of God, this earthly composition of ours would have been preserved from all corruption by the more excellent part of man, which came from heaven, and would have lived perpetually. But after sin, it was decreed that every man must die once: for through sin, death entered into the world and spread to all men, so that not even one can escape this punishment of death inflicted because of sin.

It must be particularly noted that in all these evils inflicted upon man because of sin, which seem to be privations and losses of temporal

and bodily goods that man would have possessed in the earthly paradise, we must primarily understand the loss of spiritual and heavenly goods; just as in the temporal goods, which God promised as rewards for virtues and good works to the just in the Old Testament, we understand the spiritual goods of grace and glory; and in the evils, which He threatened as vengeance for vices and evil works to the impious and sinners, we understand eternal punishments: since good works done out of charity cannot be justly and appropriately rewarded with temporal goods, which are much inferior; nor can sins be duly punished with temporal evils, since they deserve eternal punishments. Thus, here too, in the loss of those goods, we must first understand the loss of the spiritual goods of grace and glory: and in the infliction of these evils, we must understand the incursion and infliction of spiritual evils, namely the guilt of sin and eternal punishment, of which we are all guilty, as long as we are not cleansed of that sin, which we draw with our nature from the womb of our mother from conception, by the grace of Christ.

Therefore, it seems to me most probable and very consistent with reason to say that such guilt was first and principally and properly the punishment inflicted for that original sin, which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was to come to destroy along with the sin itself. However, all the evils which we now read about and experience are not properly the punishments of that sin, but the conditions of a new covenant which God established with man after that sin was committed, which indeed come from sin and were produced and derived from it; inasmuch as if that sin had not intervened, neither would these things have ever existed in any way, nor would the Lord have placed us in this new state of misery and exile: but we would have remained in the former state completely happy in every respect.

And what confirms my belief in this matter even more greatly is that when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and true God from true God, came to destroy the punishment of that original sin along with the sin itself, by His grace received in the sacrament of Baptism, all the guilt of that original sin is removed. Yet we, though liberated from sin and its guilt by Christ's grace, are still afflicted by these punishments, namely labor, sweat, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and countless other inconveniences, and finally death. Therefore, all these evils are not the proper punishments of original sin, but the conditions of the new covenant which God established with man after sin. For just as in the original state He made a covenant with him that if he did not taste the fruit of that tree, he would perpetually enjoy immortality and all other goods of that most delightful paradise, so that no matter how much he sinned, he would never lose those goods as long as he did not eat the fruit of that tree; in the same way, after he sinned and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He made this covenant with him that, since he did not want to be content with his former lot, he would perpetually be subject to the laws of the second covenant, namely that he would live his life with pain and labor and be subject to death and eventually die: and no matter how much grace that makes him acceptable to God would be granted to him in this state, he would never be exempt from the laws and conditions of this second covenant nor escape them; but he would remain perpetually subject and subjugated to them.

Verse 20: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Hebrew Text: And Adam called his wife's name Chava, because she was the mother of all living.

Chaldean Paraphrast: Because she was the mother of all the children of men.

Septuagint: And Adam called his wife's name Life.

Since in the primeval state the first man was without a helper similar to himself, the Lord God brought the woman, formed and built from a rib taken from the man while he was in a deep sleep, to Adam to see what he would call her. When he saw her and recognized that she was taken from him, he loved her greatly and gave her a name nearly his own, saying: She shall be called Woman, or "vira," because she was taken out of Man. But after the sin, he gave her another name and, having received the sentence of death, called her Eve, or Chava, that is, Life, because she was the mother of all living. Certainly, this passage does not seem consistent and clear in every respect: rather, she should have been called the mother of death and those dying, than of the living, since the sentence of death had now been pronounced on all mankind and she had in a way become the principal cause of this death's guilt. Then, why is this new name given when the first was most fitting?

Many Hebrew scholars, as Rabbi Abrabanel reports here, offering a reason for this, "said that when the woman was first brought to the man and given to him, Adam thought she was to be his companion and helper, not for marriage and bearing children. However, when it was said to the woman in her curse, 'I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception,' then Adam understood that she was given to him for marriage and the generation of children. For this reason, after the curse, he called her name Chava, so that she might be the mother of all living, as if it had been declared that this was her purpose, namely, to bear and be the mother of all living, that is, of all the children of the world, and she would be the mother of all living in the way that all flesh of the living enters. And flesh in these verses refers to the species of humans, not to the species of other animals. Therefore, in the beginning, he called her name Woman, or "vira," as if expressing her composition and formation; but now, after the sin, he calls her name for the sake of generation.

But this does not seem satisfactory. For Adam was a great wise man and knowledgeable, and nothing of the natural world was unknown to him, nor was it hidden from him that the power and nature of the woman was to bear children and that his female was for generation, just like the females of other animals; for he gave names to all living creatures according to the truths of their natures.”

This explanation is not satisfactory, so let us propose another one: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, that is, Life, or Living, in this miserable and mortal life, because she was the mother of all living, since no one was born or created after her without a woman. For before her, Adam was formed by God without a woman; and the woman herself was built from the rib of the man by God also without a woman; but after her, no man has been or will be without a woman. For all men who are born into this world according to the usual course of nature are from a man and a woman, except for our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made without a man by the divine power and operation of the Holy Spirit through a woman alone. Therefore, Eve is very fittingly called the mother of all living, more so than if Adam were called the father of all living. For although all men are born from both a father and a mother, according to the defined terms of natural law and established rights, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and true and perfect man, was born from a woman only and not from a man; thus He had a mother on earth, but not an earthly father, but a heavenly one according to His divine nature, not according to His human nature. Therefore, since the woman was not only the mother of all other humans, of whom the first man was the father, but also the parent of that unique and singular man, having conceived and given birth, she is most rightly called the mother of all living.

However, it should not be thought that this second name given to the woman destroys the first one: but both are fitting for her. The first indeed because of the construction of her condition; thus it was said:

She shall be called Woman, or "vira," because she was taken out of Man: the second because all the sons of men, that is, all humans, were to descend from her. Hence, after this name was given to her, the reason is immediately provided; for it says: And he called his wife's name Eve, that is, Life, because she was the mother of all living, that is, of all the sons of men.

According to the Targum, this explanation is the most accurate and highly consistent with the text, which the Chaldean Paraphrast also approves, and all the Holy Doctors embrace.

However, I will not omit a certain exposition of this passage, which I read in Rabbi Abrabanel. For he interprets this passage as follows: And Adam called his wife's name חַוָּה (Chava), because she was the mother of כָּל־חַי (kol-chai). Before bringing forward his exposition, I thought it worthwhile to explain these two words. First, the name of the woman. That name, according to common opinion, is derived from the root חַיָּה (chayah), which means life; otherwise, the proper root of the word is חָוָה (chavah), and it means to announce, manifest, indicate. The other word, חַי (chai), signifies a certain living being, but life in a sense of sensation, not reason; hence in Sacred Scripture, that word very frequently signifies brute animals and beasts. Therefore, this doctor, taking these words in their second meaning, interprets this passage as follows: "Adam saw all the evil that pursued him from the words of the woman and because of her persuasion, and he regretted calling her אִשָּׁה (ishah), that is, virago, or vira, because he saw that she was similar to him, who was a man, and he like her; and therefore, after he was cursed because of her, he called her חַוָּה (Chava), that is, speaking, from the language of indicating or manifesting, or announcing knowledge. Wait a little, and I will explain to you. And he said: since in her nature there is a will to be assimilated to animals, as she did in the deceit of the serpent, who wanted to eat from the tree, as it itself was eating, and she was the mother of all animals, loving animals, to which her

children are similar, and therefore she greatly understood in their works. As if, he says, just as an animal is in the lot of knowledge, she is in truth or the measure of the formation or expression of animals; truly, since she is of the human species, she is more glorious or honorable than them, and it is fitting that they serve her as if she were the mother of all animals. She includes all species of animals, and it is possible to explain: because she is the mother of every animal because of reason; as if to say that Eve, in as much as she is speaking or rational, in this she is the mother of all animals superior to them.”

Therefore, the exposition of this doctor is that this name was given to the woman by the man for her reproach and perpetual confusion, because she spoke according to the mind of the devil, who indicated and announced to her the knowledge of good and evil, and that her children, who were to be born from her, would be like beasts, since she desired to be assimilated to animals.

Verse 21: And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife tunics of skin, or hide, and clothed them.

Chaldean Paraphrast: And God made for Adam and his wife garments of honor upon their skin, or the skin of their flesh, and clothed them.

The Septuagint translated it as leather garments.

This passage is interpreted differently by Hebrew doctors. Rabbi Isaac, in Bereshit Rabbah, explains it as God making tunics of linen for them to cover their skin, or their flesh and their limbs. Rabbi Samuel says that their clothing was made of rabbit wool and camel wool, and they are called garments of skin because they come from the skins of animals; so their tunics were not made of linen, but of

the wool of animals. These are reported by Rabbi Abrabanel; however, he himself interprets it differently.

We, however, interpret it this way, according to the opinion of the Holy Doctors and many Hebrews as well. When God was about to eject man from the paradise of pleasure as punishment for sin, where the air of that place was most even and temperate, to a place where he would be affected by the harshness of the air, He deemed it necessary not to eject him naked, but clothed, so that he could in some way be protected from the harshness and intemperance of the air. For He saw that the loincloths, which they had sewn for themselves to escape the shame and confusion of their nakedness, were entirely useless and inept both for covering their nakedness and for defending them against the cold and the harshness of the air in the place to which He intended to eject them. Therefore, He made for them tunics of skins to clothe them; He did not make them loincloths, as they had made for themselves, but tunics, which would cover not just the shameful parts of the body but the whole body; and these were not made of sewn fig leaves, but of hides and skins of animals: and He clothed them in such a way that they themselves could not have clothed themselves.

And these garments were made without tools and the work of joining them, therefore it was a divine work; and they were made by the will of God simply, just as things that were made in the beginning of creation and brought to Him, as is well said in this passage: And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife tunics of skins and clothed them: because they were made by the word and will of God. Unless we say that God made these garments of skins for the first humans because when they had sewn for themselves loincloths of fig leaves, which were not suitable for preserving the body from the harms that threatened and from shame, He showed them inwardly and taught them to kill brute animals and make garments for themselves from their skins, more fitting; so it can be

said that God made them because He taught the first humans to make them and showed them from what they should be made and advised them that they needed garments both for preserving modesty and for protecting the body from harm.

For he could not, unlike other animals, remain naked while preserving his dignity, as they are said to surpass humans in this respect to some degree, since nature has suitably provided for them, and they do not need other garments for the protection of their bodies, but those with which nature has clothed them suffice.

However, man needs clothing for both dignity and the protection of the body. Therefore, this need for clothing would in no way have existed in the integrity of that primeval state, if Adam had persisted in his righteousness and that sin had not intervened; otherwise, man would have been in a worse condition than other animals. But righteousness, I mean the original righteousness about which we have spoken before, would always have been present as his covering, and divine assistance would have been there for defense and the repulsion of all evil. Thus, the need and necessity for clothing are signified in this work of God.

He clothed them with the skins of dead animals, not without reason, but with great purpose. First, so that man might recognize from the quality of those garments what he had become through sin. For when He fitted man with the clothing of irrational beasts, He certainly showed that man, because of sin, had been turned into a beast in a detestable metamorphosis. For man, being in honor, did not understand; he was compared to senseless animals and became like them. Therefore, after sin, He gave him the herbs of the earth, which are food for the beasts, and now He clothes him with their covering. Second, since the skins were of dead animals, He instructed him and us with him and in him, that we are mortal and destined to die because of sin; and so that we might always remember that we too will die someday, just as those animals, from

whose skins the garments were made, died. Third, in this work itself, God showed that anything in clothing that is cared for beyond necessity and the decency of status, for magnificence, splendor, and vanity, is not without sin. Finally, so that Christ, who was promised to them as the Redeemer from the seed of the woman, might be foreshadowed, who was always prefigured in the sacrifices of animals, through whose death divine grace, which they had lost, and righteousness would clothe men and ultimately clothe them with glory.

I, however, believe that when God taught those first humans to kill animals and clothe themselves with their skins, He also taught them to sacrifice those slain animals in honor of the Divine. For it is very clearly established in Sacred Scripture that the sacrifice of animals flourished among those first humans, who offered them to the Lord as a sweet-smelling aroma, as seen in the sacrifice of Noah and also in the offering of the first righteous man, Abel, who offered a sacrifice to the Lord from the firstborn and the fat of his flock. In those sacrifices, Christ was principally signified, prefigured, and sacrificed for the redemption of the sin of the first man. I also believe that this kind of sacrifice was a holocaust, such that all the flesh was burned and consumed in honor of the Divine, since the eating of meat was not yet permitted to those humans until Noah's time.

Verse 22: And He said: Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; now, therefore, lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord God said: Behold, Adam has become like one of us, to know good and evil; now, therefore, etc., and live forever.

Chaldean Paraphrast: Behold, Adam has become my only one, or my only-begotten in the world, or eternity, from myself to know good and evil, and live forever.

Jerusalem Targum: Behold, Adam is the only rational being in the midst of the world, just as I am alone in heaven above; many peoples will arise from him; from him will arise a people who will know how to discern between good and evil; and thus it is good that he be expelled from the garden of Eden, before he extends his hand and takes from the fruit of the tree of life and lives forever.

We interpret this passage in this way, although it is variously interpreted by the Hebrews. Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. This is irony alluding to what the serpent had said: You will be like gods, knowing good and evil. Therefore, as we said above that there: You will be like gods, can refer to God Himself, or to the divine Persons, and also to the angels and great sages, or superior spirits: so now also in what is said: Like one of us: it can either refer to the divine Persons, or to the angels and superior spirits, as many Hebrews also interpret. This irony was very bitter, for having clothed him with the skins of dead animals, to show by the act that man through sin had become like beasts, He then mockingly suggests that he has become like one of the gods: Behold, He says, Adam, who through the serpent's persuasion sought to be like the gods and for that reason transgressed my command, what a glorious god he has become, how wise and knowing good and evil! Indeed, he who was the god of this world and my representative on earth, has become like the beasts!

Certainly, this word of God is a severe rebuke. However, it has now been turned into great joy and consolation for us, since man has truly become like one of the gods, that is, one of the divine Persons in Christ, in whom man became God, united in one person with the Word of God, with the Son of God, with the true God. This indeed

was not unknown to the first man, but this joy was first promised to him; therefore, he endured that rebuke patiently, although it was severe, because of the hope of future joy.

But because he was not yet worthy of such joy, he was to be expelled from that most delightful paradise as a punishment for sin: Now, therefore, lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. This sentence is incomplete and must be understood as the Jerusalem Targum supplements: Now, therefore, it is good, or fitting, that he be expelled from the paradise of pleasure, lest he put forth his hand; which is very consistent with what follows: And He expelled him from the paradise and placed the cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life. I believe that in these words the divine decree about expelling man from paradise is to be understood, along with irony and severe reproach: Now, therefore, lest he put forth his hand, etc. What fear could have held God back that man might eat from that tree of paradise and live forever, such that He had to expel man from there? Could He not have provided another remedy than expulsion? But because man was unworthy to enjoy those delights and the pleasantness and to obtain longer life, He decreed that man should be expelled from there and pricked him with severe irony: Now, therefore, lest he take from the tree of life: for, He says, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, even against our will and envy, it must now be diligently ensured that such his dignity and majesty do not last forever. Therefore, let us expel him from paradise lest, with the same audacity with which he already put forth his hand and took from the tree of knowledge, he secretly also takes from the tree of life and eats and lives forever. Although the sentence given in these words against man was truly severe and just, the words themselves should be taken as spoken ironically.

But someone might say: if man had eaten from that tree of life, would he have lived forever? Indeed, these words seem to suggest

this: Lest he take from the tree of life and eat, and live forever. Certainly, I would think that the nature of that tree had this virtue, by God's grace, to preserve human life intact. Therefore, while other trees were given to them for food to restore the original moisture lost by the action of heat, this one was created more for healing than for food, so that those who partook of its fruit would have the strength of their kind confirmed and preserved from all defect; so that by the action of heat and the loss of moisture and the advent of foreign moisture, the goodness of the original moisture would not be diminished, nor would heat be weakened due to the lack of sustenance, and through the virtue of this fruit, the sufficiently restored moisture would be as good as that which was lost. Therefore, it was a kind of remedy against the weakening that now occurs due to the nature of nourishment, and thus man would have enjoyed a prolonged life, with God's decree not being against him.

But after sin, we say without any hesitation that, since it was decreed that man should die once, God's decree was given that he should return to the earth from which he was taken, for he was dust and to dust he would return: no matter how much he ate from that tree of life, he would never have achieved through the nourishment of that tree to live forever and never die; because even the nourishment of that tree had to be converted into the substance of man by the power of heat, certainly not without some detriment to the heat this would have been done; since everything acting in its nature suffers some effect in the process; especially since, although it was the most friendly nourishment to nature, it was nevertheless different in the principle of nutrition and had to be completely assimilated into the substance of the nourished by the action of heat; in this process, some heat, albeit a little, would have been suffered, and even though it might have been remarkably continuous, it would have eventually been exhausted. However, through the nourishment of that tree, due to its perfection, his life could have been extended and made longer,

and this is what is signified here by the word "forever"; hence in Hebrew it is: And he will live לְעֹלָם (le'olam), for an age. For this word does not properly mean eternity, as we noted from Aben Ezra above, but the longevity of time with a term.

Verse 23: And the Lord sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the ground from which he was taken.

Adam did not leave, did not emigrate from that paradise, but was cast out: "And he sent him out," that is, he cast him out of paradise, that most delightful place, rich in all kinds of pleasures, into a sterile and unfruitful land, very laborious, where he would not delight as he did there, but would be pressed by the heaviest labors: "To till the ground from which he was taken." Hence, it is clear that man was formed outside of paradise, as it is also said above: "The Lord God formed man from the slime of the earth and placed him in the paradise of pleasure," so that he might know that the inhabitant and lord of that most delightful place was not established by nature, but by grace; therefore, having lost grace, he is justly expelled from there and sent to his natural place, to cultivate the land from which he was formed, and to always have before his eyes the land to which he was again to be reduced.

Verse 24: And he drove out Adam, and placed before the paradise of pleasure the Cherubim, and a flaming and turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Hebrew text: And I drove out Adam, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and the blades of a turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Thus, precisely, the Chaldean interpreter, except that he translated מִקְדֶּם (mikedem), from the east, as מִלְּקַדָּמִין (millekadamim), which means before, prior, formerly, from ancient times.

The Septuagint, however, attributes what is said about the Cherubim to Adam himself, saying that he was established by God from that part of the paradise. For they have: And he placed him on the opposite side of the paradise of delights, and appointed Cherubim to guard the place. Yet the Hebrew truth is as we have set out above, namely that the Cherubim were placed on the eastern side of the paradise, and not Adam.

The expositions of this passage are numerous and very diverse. Rabbi Abrabanel thus explains that these Cherubim "are, according to the Targum [Chaldean], כְּרוּבִיָּא (kerubayya), that is, like an infant, or infants; and the great doctor Rabbi More has already declared that Cherubim are young children from the sons of men; and according to this, Scripture says that when God drove Adam out of the paradise of Eden, he placed before the paradise, that is, in his place of habitation, the Cherubim; as if to say that they were wearied in their children, who were born to them, Cain and Abel: for they are the Cherubim, whom he placed in his habitation before the paradise, and the distress he saw in his life from his children, and death and wandering among his children and the blade of a turning sword; for behold, great pain or affliction fell upon him, and the blade of a turning sword on this side and that; on this side Abel was killed, and on that side Cain. All these things came upon him to guard the way to the tree of life; as if to say to cast him out from the land of the living and to lead him to death." This is the exposition of this doctor on this passage.

Some others explain differently. But first, they establish certain points about the location of paradise. Firstly, they state that this paradise cannot be between the two tropics under the equinoctial line on the solar table, because they say that region is very hot since the sun passes over it twice a year, thus it has both summer and winter twice a year, which is why it is called the torrid zone and is uninhabitable due to excessive heat. Therefore, they assert that

paradise must be located outside the tropics; and since the land in which paradise was planted by God was the best and most fertile, producing fruits by itself, they say it must be situated under the noblest part of the sky, because the nobility and fertility of the land come from the noble influence of the stars and the aspect of the sky. And since the southern part of the sky is nobler than the northern part, with the southern hemisphere being the vertex and head of the world, while the northern is lower, and consequently the southern stars are larger, brighter, nobler, more perfect, and of greater virtue than the northern stars, hence the southern pole is also greater and brighter than our northern arctic, according to philosophers who speculate on these matters; therefore, they state that this paradise is situated beyond the southern tropic, called Capricorn, toward the eastern part, which is nobler; because the east is the right hand of the world, and the west is the left: and the right hand is nobler than the left.

They therefore assert that paradise was situated beyond the solar table and beyond the winter tropic in the southern hemisphere; they also try to prove this through that passage in Genesis: "When Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking... at the breeze of the afternoon." By interpreting the solar table and the torrid zone as the meridian, because the whole southern part of the earth is called the meridian or south, and by the breeze, they mean the air of that place, which is called a breeze due to its goodness and the sweetest light, tempered and delightful. And they make this distinction between the breeze and the meridian: for the meridian is the air illuminated with the most intense light and excessive heat, such as is found between the tropics; but the breeze is the most pleasant and vital air, moderately bright and warm, such as is in the southern hemisphere due to the favor of the stars. Therefore, since the meridian means the solar table, and the breeze means the air of that paradise, since such a breeze is called the afternoon, it follows that the southern region is

meant, which is after the meridian; and it was given to the first parents for habitation and inheritance, from which they were expelled because of sin into this valley of misery, on this side of the tropic of Capricorn, by which that paradise was enclosed and bordered. They also say that this tropic should be understood by the flaming and turning sword; because when the sun is in the southern signs, approaching the opposite of the snake, fire is generated in that tropic.

They also say that if sin had not intervened, humans would have occupied not only that region but the entire southern hemisphere, as that race would have multiplied immensely, since none of them would have died, but, fed by the tree of life, they would have extended their happy lives for a very long time, until they were translated into a better life without the intervention of death; thus, being greatly multiplied, they would have occupied that entire hemisphere. Nor would any part of that hemisphere have been uninhabitable; for, they say, there are no steep mountains, precipices, seas, or marshes in that region, except that those four rivers, with a very slow flow and very pleasant course, would have irrigated the whole region and the garden of delights. These rivers submerge at the end of the hemisphere near the tropic, and through subterranean passages, they boil up and emerge in our northern part through a kind of equilibrium; for Tigris and Euphrates arise from the mountains of Armenia, and Phison, which is called the Ganges, from the mountains of India, and Gehon, which is called the Nile, from the mountains of Ethiopia. This is the faithful position of those who place paradise in the southern region beyond the tropic of Capricorn.

This does not entirely satisfy me. Firstly, the statement that the region beyond the tropic of Capricorn is very temperate is problematic. It is evident that the sun, by its own motion, moves from tropic to tropic always equally, and its influence is the same in both. Therefore, just as its approach to us causes intense summer and

vehement heat, and its departure causes winter and intense cold in the northern hemisphere; in the same way, by opposition, its approach to the tropic of Capricorn will cause intense and vehement heat, and its departure will cause intense cold and winter; which is contrary to the temperateness of the air and the place.

Then: since the planets move equally between these two hemispheres, they will cause the same effects in their conjunctions with each other and with other stars and signs in that hemisphere as they do in this one; and since in this hemisphere the malignant planets cause sterility, pestilence, and other diseases, so they will in that one as well.

Furthermore, what they say about humans inhabiting that entire hemisphere seems problematic. For just as the land under the Arctic pole has only one day and one night in the whole year, because for six months, while the sun is in the southern signs, it is always night under the Arctic pole, and consequently always day in the Antarctic; conversely, for the other six months, while the sun is in the northern signs, it is always day at this pole and night at that one; therefore, there cannot be the pleasantness and delight for the inhabitants that they describe.

Then: what they say about the place in Genesis is not relevant. For, as we explained there, the Hebrew Truth has: "When they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the breeze of the day," so that those words signify not the place but the time, that is, after the middle of the day, which is in the evening. Moreover, what they say about the flaming and turning sword, that it is the fiery tropic, is not valid. For that fire generation is natural, if it even exists: for I believe it is not true, since no such fire is generated by the sun's approach to the tropic of Cancer around the tropic. Now, since Scripture says that the sword was placed before paradise after

Adam's sin and after he was expelled from it, it indicates that it was not there by the nature of the place but by the will of God.

Lastly, what they say about those rivers, which flow out from the place of delight, irrigating the region beyond the tropic of Capricorn and then submerging near the tropic and bubbling up and emerging through some sort of equilibrium in our hemisphere, I do not see how that could be true. How can they penetrate so many lands and mountains to flow through immense tracts of land, and then, upon emerging, appear to have different origins? And more difficult still, how can they cross such a vast expanse of ocean, the deepest and largest of all seas, to burst forth into these northern airs? For that vast and deepest sea lies in between. Since, therefore, these things cannot be true, another explanation of this passage must be sought.

There have been others who place that paradise under the equinoctial line. For they say that region is very temperate; since it is always equinox there, that is, throughout the year night is equal to day, so that the presence and absence of the sun are equal, through this equal alternation the greatest temperateness of regions and the best disposition of the place are produced. Therefore, Ptolemy and other geographers assign many habitable regions in this zone; and experience shows that those regions are very temperate and highly suitable for habitation. For ships that have sailed from the kingdom of Portugal into those airs, passing under the equinoctial line, have found the lands to be the best and most fertile, flowing with milk and honey.

To those who say that region is uninhabitable due to the extreme heat, they respond that this is indeed true near the tropics; for the people inhabiting the land near the tropics are very dark-skinned and short-lived due to the excess heat consuming the radical moisture. However, it is not so under the equinoctial line. Therefore, they understand the torrid zone between our habitation and the

equinoctial line by the flaming and turning sword, and it is said to be turning because the sun, which causes the unbearable heat near the tropic, approaches us in the summer and moves away in the winter.

But certainly, this position does not satisfy very well either. For since that torrid zone is due to the nature of the place, which would have always been even if man had remained in paradise, there is no reason to say that the flaming and turning sword, which was placed there by God to guard that place, was produced by nature.

Others have placed this paradise at the beginning of Cancer; and that the flaming and turning sword is a kind of gaping chasm in a mountain, from which fire always comes out, appearing like a sword. But then it would be necessary to assume the parts of that land are sulfurous, from which that fire would be generated, and it would be a fire naturally produced, just as in Vulcan and Mount Etna fire is generated from the sulfurous parts of the earth.

Therefore, I hold a different opinion on this matter. But first, the mind should be reminded of the location of paradise, as we explained earlier in its place: "The Lord God planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning." Indeed, the Hebrew Truth there, as we have previously noted, states: "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, to the east, or in the eastern part." Certainly, the Scripture speaks very clearly and shows the condition of that place. It indeed calls that paradise a garden, and we would not think it to extend through immense tracts of land and to be of immense magnitude in length and breadth.

Secondly, it declares the name of the region in which this paradise or garden was situated, saying: "In Eden," a region named for its pleasantness, delights, and pleasures, because that region was the most pleasant and delightful, very temperate and highly suitable for habitation.

Thirdly, it shows which part of the world this paradise faces, and from which part of the region it was planted by God, saying: "From the east, or from the eastern part." Therefore, we have the location where this paradise was established.

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This region, which is called Eden, should not be thought to be outside our world; nor to reach to the stars, as some have supposed; nor beyond the tropic of Capricorn, which region was always unknown; nor under the equinoctial: but rather to be situated under that position of the sky which could be inhabited and was inhabited and frequented by the first humans and their descendants. For Adam, expelled from paradise, did not cross the sea, nor was he driven as far away as possible through long tracts of land and seas: but he was

placed before the gates of paradise, not far from that place, but near paradise, to inhabit that land, as the Septuagint translates and all the Greek Doctors hold, especially Chrysostom in this place. This is also confirmed by the testimony of Scripture. For Cain, having gone out from the face of the Lord, dwelt as a wanderer and fugitive to the east of Eden with his descendants and built a city there. Adam and Seth are thought to have inhabited the land not far from there, but near; otherwise, how could the sons of God, that is, those descended from Adam through Seth, so called because of their worship of God, see the daughters of men, that is, those descended from Cain, that they were beautiful, and take for themselves wives from all they chose, greatly provoking God to destroy all flesh? Therefore, if Cain dwelt to the east of Eden, which was the region where paradise was planted, then Adam, Seth, and all their descendants did not inhabit the land far from that region. Adam indeed did not live far from the promised land; for he is believed to be buried in Hebron in the double cave, as it is said in the book of Joshua; where also Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah were buried.

Hence, I also think that the region of Eden is still inhabited and is the one we read about in Ezekiel, who, taking up a lamentation over Tyre, says among other things: "Haran and Canneh and Eden were your merchants," naming regions from which merchants came to Tyre. Therefore, if merchants came to Tyre, which is near the land of Israel, from Eden, that is, the place of paradise, it is clear that the place was inhabited and was not far removed by great distances from the land of Israel. For no one doubts that Haran is not far from the land of Israel; Haran is the region near the land of Israel, which is called Mesopotamia, and there are found the rivers which are said to flow out of paradise. Haran is between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates; hence it is called Mesopotamia in Greek, meaning the region between two rivers. Concerning Phison and Gehon, what we have said above should be consulted.

Therefore, all these things make me certain that the renowned paradise was planted in the region of Eden, which is not far from the land of Israel, to the east of it, and that this region is now inhabited by humans: because the waters of the flood overturned that paradise and thus that most pleasant and delightful place fell. For the waters of the flood inundated the whole earth... and prevailed over all the mountains that are under the whole heaven; and they also covered that place and overturned those most pleasant trees.

As long as that place endured, we have no doubt that the Cherubim, heavenly spirits, were placed there to guard it, with a flaming and turning sword, or with the blade of a sword—that is, he placed there a burning and exposed sword, which seemed to vomit flame: such was the splendor! And it terrified those approaching with a horrible fear; and it is called turning because it barred every way that led to the tree of life with its terror. Perhaps the Cherubim were placed there in the same way as the angel of the Lord, holding an unsheathed sword in his hand, guarded the way, barring Balaam from approaching to curse the children of Israel, having been summoned by Balak. Or certainly, by this sword is understood the threat of the punishment of death, in the manner of Scripture, which was brought by angelic ministry to those presuming to approach that place; just as the Lord had warned that none of the children of Israel should presume to touch the sacred vessels of ministry, or the ark, or to enter the sanctuary or the Holy of Holies, except those to whom it was officially permitted: and those indeed who were clean and sanctified, under the threat of the punishment of death, which was brought by angelic ministry.

However, it could be that to guard the way to the tree of life, lamps and lightning flashed by angelic ministry, which threatened death to those approaching. For the word לַהַט (lahat), which we have said signifies blade, also signifies lightning and lamp, because it could flash there like a sword. But after that paradise was destroyed, all

that guarding ceased; just as after the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies were destroyed, all the guarding, observances, and ministries that were done there ceased.

Some, however, believe that this place still remains intact and that Enoch, Elijah, and the apostle John live there a happy life until the judgment. But it is not established anywhere that they were translated to that paradise; for Enoch indeed, as Scripture testifies, was taken up: but to what place, Scripture does not relate; Elijah likewise was translated: but to what place, Scripture does not reveal; concerning John, it is entirely uncertain whether he still lives in the flesh. And as for what we read about Elijah in Ecclesiasticus, that he was taken up or translated to paradise, we say that some eminent and lofty place prepared by God for him is designated by the name of paradise. For it is possible for God to preserve him wherever He pleases; nor is it necessary to place that paradise for this reason. The same must be said of Enoch and John, if he still lives.

There may be a question about the Cherubim, how God applied those exalted spirits to guard the way to the tree of life. For Cherubim are spirits of the second choir of the highest sacred principalities, or hierarchy; according to Saint Dionysius, however, they are not usually sent, but only angels of the lowest hierarchy and the last and penultimate choirs. But it can be answered to this that sometimes by Cherubim all angels are understood, and thus also angels of the lowest hierarchy and the last choir. Secondly, that if perhaps that care was given to those heavenly spirits of the choir specifically called Cherubim, they nonetheless executed that guardianship through inferiors, just as the Seraph who was sent to cleanse Isaiah's lips. For, as Saint Dionysius teaches, that Seraph did not execute that office by himself, but through some inferior.

Moreover, the reason why the Lord God applied those angels to this guardianship has been clearly stated above: so that men would not

take from the tree of life and live forever, that is, prolong their life, which sinful men would have used very badly, sinning more frequently and remaining in sins longer. Therefore, it was better that men be prohibited from eating from that tree, so that, as it prolonged life longer and further, they would not multiply sins all the more. Now let us proceed to the fourth chapter.

Chapter Four

Verse 1: Adam knew his wife Eve, who conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have obtained a man through God."

Hebrew Text: "I have obtained" or "I have acquired a man, the Lord," or "from the Lord," or "for the Lord."

Chaldaic Text: "I have obtained a man from the presence of the Lord."

Adam knew his wife Eve. Scripture always speaks honestly and decently; for what is shameful, it expresses not with the obscenity of words, but with as much decency and honesty as possible; it calls the union and adherence of a man to a woman in the act of marriage, "knowing": Adam, it says, knew his wife. For the first couple came together in the act of legitimate marriage after committing sin and after the hope of regaining lost blessing in the seed of the woman. They came together, moreover, to beget children and propagate the human race, lest with their demise, human nature should also perish, which was not God's will: but that it should remain forever. Therefore, they came together also to obey God.

Finally, as a remedy for lust; for marriage, after sin, is granted as a remedy for lust: however, the primary and principal end of it, which is generation, should not be cut off. Otherwise, if the union is made solely to fulfill lust, so that they do not wish for generation, it is a grave sin and a marriage rejected by God; for this reason, Her and Onan, the sons of Judah, were struck down by God, because they were united with Tamar not for generation but solely to fulfill lust. However, the first parents were not united in this way: but for the purpose of procreation; therefore, it follows: She conceived and bore Cain, that is, a son, to whom this name was given, as it follows:

Saying, "I have obtained a man through God"; for Cain signifies possession and acquisition.

Before we ascend to a higher contemplation of this place, we shall introduce some points about the formation of the human body in the womb. First, concerning the nature, excellence, and powers of the seed by which a woman conceives.

The seed indeed originates from the third digestion and concoction of food, being by nature airy, warm, and moist, filled with much spirit, and indeed warm spirit; the warmth of the testicles converts it into foam, making it solidify and whiten.

Its remarkable powers are such that from so small a seed arises such a beautiful arrangement of limbs, such a suitable order, such an effective composition, such an excellent connection of individual parts, such a remarkable diversity and harmony of organs, the causes of so many operations and faculties, so many spirits; how every form and species of both the whole body and its individual parts precede and are contained in the seed and the sketch of the entire future work; how in the mixed and confused seed there is such a distinction of forms and species of the whole body and its individual parts.

For whatever is procreated and arises from the seed must first be contained in the seed in potentiality and power, and possess all the power of the soul and be endowed with its strengths and faculties, as these will eventually appear and be activated from there. For it contains within itself the natural and nourishing soul, as the seed conceived in the womb enjoys life just like a plant; the soul that is partaker of sensation, from which the name "animal" is derived, comes with the progress of time; then finally the power of reason, by which man is named, is infused and supervenes. Both the vegetative and the sensory soul are contained in the seed in potentiality and

power, and they emerge from it and perform their functions until they are superseded by the arrival of the rational soul.

The initial formation of man from the seed begins in this way. The fertile seeds of the male and female, when they meet at the right time with a certain harmonious moderation, join together with a mutual affinity and blend so truly that the power of both becomes one and the same nature. Both must contribute, not only the male, even though it is more excellent and fertile, but also the female; for it is inferred that the female's seed is fertile and has a procreative and shaping power because it originates in her as it does in the male, from the testes and vessels. Moreover, a woman afflicted with epilepsy, or stone, or gout, begets offspring inheriting these maladies; and finally, the offspring is often similar to the mother. All of these are caused not by maternal blood, but by the seed that is poured out from her.

Therefore, the seed that comes from the similar parts of the woman has a certain power for the making and forming of similar parts. The nature and extent of this power are shown by the eggs, which are called adventitious, and by moles, which women sometimes conceive solely by the power of their own seed, without any intercourse with a man. In these, there is indeed a certain semblance of procreation and a concretion of raw material, which, if the seed of the male, equipped with its powers, had joined, would have completed it with all numbers and ornaments, as it is much more potent. Nevertheless, it does not achieve anything on its own and isolated, but only when mixed with the female's seed.

Thus, when fertile seeds are mixed together, immediately the latent power in the seed is stirred, and it diversely distracts the material of this seed and separates its parts: for it is not entirely uniform and alike in all parts. Therefore, immediately within one or two days, the thinner, warmer parts of the seed, which are more filled with spirit,

move inward and into the middle of the whole mass; the thicker and more earthy parts surround them and enclose them; from these harder and more coagulated parts, due to the womb's contact and heat, the membranes enveloping the fetus are formed.

The outermost and first membrane is called the ἀλλάντοειδής (allantois), which is thin, weak, and narrower than the one that envelopes the entire conception, but it stretches out with long and narrow processes to each end; through this membrane, called the χορίον (chorion), it is attached to the apices of the uterus. Beneath this, the entire outer and more earthy part of the seed—since the seed always gathers itself into a narrow space and contains its greatest powers in the middle part—, which contacts the uterus, solidifies into another membrane, which the Latins call the secundines. The seed, being slow and cohesive on all sides, thickens and is further compressed by heat, and hence its outermost surface coagulates into the substance of the membrane; as it is light, it is attached to the uterus and adheres through the mouths of the vessels that end in the uterus, which are called acetabula (cotyledons), through which the seed draws nourishment; the membrane is perforated when it is still soft and newly formed.

Besides these, a third membrane, called the ἀμνίον (amnion), is generated, encompassing and wrapping around the entire conception, certainly strong and destined to be the repository of sweat; the remaining seed, which is enclosed inside, is much thinner and is diffused much more by heat. Hence soon the conceiving spirit swells, and during that time whatever is thin in the seed transforms into spirit: not indeed a wind-filled one, for the uterus does not swell with wind or twist with its distension, nor does any force of wind break out through the cervix of the uterus; but it is so transformed into spirit that this spirit, the moderator of all warmth and faculties and the principal author of procreation, places itself in the middle of the seed. For it does not vanish or fly away from the seed; but

remains in it as the conformer and artisan of all parts, deeply and completely ingrained, becoming the first nature of all parts and, having initially formed them, thereafter always assisting, conserving them for the entire life as long as it can, in the healthiest manner possible.

Thus, this spirit is both the primary vehicle and instrument of the procreative faculty—for the supreme and divine power of formation is established in it—and all other natural faculties by which the conception is altered and grows, as well as their auxiliaries, it alone sustains and comprehends all these. From this it becomes clear that the spirit and every kind of faculty originate from the seed. In this way, what was recently simple seed emitted by the parents takes on the nature of life, or, to explain more clearly, the natural force that was previously dormant in the seed is then aroused to act as it performs its innate function, which we have said is conception and is so named.

Thus, this spirit, possessing faculties and the instrument of nature, establishes three bubbles in the middle of the seed, like translucent drops, which immediately exhibit rudiments and beginnings of the three principles: the heart, liver, and brain; and although many hold the opinion that the heart is formed first, observation and experience have shown that from the purer and more vigorous portion of the seed, which settles in the middle of the womb, three portions, which flow from the three principles of the parents, first appear in the middle of the seed as if divided into three bubbles, filled with spirit and faculty, and these are the rudiments of the liver, heart, and brain.

Then, the generative faculty transforms the matter of the seed and makes it suitable for formation; and thus, other portions appear somewhat thicker, which will become bones; others are thin and liquid, from which nerves, veins, and membranes will be formed: in this way, a preparation of all parts is established for the future

formation of this work. By the seventh day, something can already be seen and much more clearly by the fifteenth day, when the parts in the seed are already distinct in substance and position.

After that time, the formative faculty begins its work, first separating the rough and initial rudiments, the liver, heart, and brain, into their proper places and adorning them with their proper shape and form; at the same time, the membranes enveloping the fetus gain strength. Soon, veins and arteries are formed within these, all leading to the fetus's umbilicus, whose openings adhere to the uterine cotyledons like the mouths of polypi. At that time, from the liver both the portal vein and the vena cava are dispersed in multiple branches, and from the heart the artery, from the brain the spinal marrow like a trunk, from which also nerves emerge thinner than spider threads: the stomach, intestines, bladder, pericardium, ὑπεξωκὼν (hupexōkōn) membrane, and περιτόναιον (peritonaion), the double μήνιγξ (meninx), and finally all membranes are extended with firm strength; the skin forms, covering everything.

From the very seed itself, not from drier flesh as some have taught, the bones gradually acquire shape and hardness from the condensed and truly solidified seed. From the bones, whatever emanates by the force of heat like foam is partly deposited at the ends of the bones for the formation of ligaments; partly it is spread around and lengthwise to form the membrane called περιόστεον (periosteon) in Greek. By the twenty-seventh day, all parts are already somewhat arranged and formed: but perfectly in males by the thirtieth day, and in females by the thirty-sixth day.

Up to this point, there is only the formation of solid parts from the seed alone, which, however small initially conceived by the parents, is enough for forming all parts without any increase or amplification. Then blood is drawn from the uterus, which first solidifies around the liver into spermatic fibers and rudiments,

forming the whole mass and substance of it. Thus, it has often been observed that a fetus expelled on the fortieth day, of half a finger's length, is truly and entirely formed, and all its parts, except the liver, appear white and spermatous: the head as large as a hazelnut and larger in proportion to the rest of the body; eyes protruding like those of a crab; nose, ears, arms, hands, legs, feet, and distinct fingers; a visible penis, beneath which is a scrotum the size of a millet grain. The upper parts are larger than the lower ones, with no bone strength, but flexible in any direction they are bent, all covered with very thin and transparent skin, through which the internal parts could be seen, all white, fibrous, and resembling seed, with no redness of flesh or blood. Only the liver was already red, ample, and very similar to recently coagulated blood, into which veins from the secundines carried blood through the umbilical cord, to nourish the fetus thereafter. From the thirty-sixth or fortieth day, the formed solid parts begin to be nourished and supported by flesh, thanks to the liver, which prepares and supplies nourishment for all.

Thus, the fetus, now adorned with a form and appearance, is entirely delicate and in every part very moist and mucous, making it less suitable for all actions; thereafter, during the remaining time, as it continuously becomes drier and more solid due to the power of heat, everything strengthens: membranes, nerves, and skin, nails take root at the ends of the fingers, and hair on the head. The fetus is endowed with sensory faculties around the thirty-sixth day. When the male reaches the third month, and the female the fourth, with the bones strengthened and somewhat hardened, it begins to move and kick.

All the spirits, powers, and faculties that the fetus possesses up to this time originate from the parents' seed, in which they were contained in potentiality and power. However, the principal soul, which is called the mind and excels in rational power, being separable from the body, was not contained in matter in potentiality, from which it would eventually emerge with the progress of time;

otherwise, being immense and perpetually dependent on the body, it would neither reason, understand, nor perform any action without a bodily organ. But, having been created first by the supreme Creator of things, it enters the prepared and furnished body of the infant in a single moment of time; it is said by some that this happens around the fourth month, at which time the heart and brain are already completed; however, due to an excess of moisture, as if in a state of drunkenness or lethargy, it cannot yet perform its proper functions. At this time, although each part appears formed, it is not yet fully completed and firm; therefore, from this point until the ninth month, when the fetus is accustomed to receive light and birth, each part will be perfected, nourished, and grow.

Then, when the fetus has reached a size and strength such that it can manage itself and process food taken by mouth, having grown larger and requiring more abundant nourishment and greater air to cool the innate heat of its spirits, it makes its own way and path. Carried in the womb, entirely bent and contracted, it places its heels against its buttocks, grasps its knees with its hands, and lowers its head so that its eyes are fixed as if attached to the thumbs of its hands, while its nose lies between its knees; the front part of its body faces the mother's abdomen, and the back part towards her spine, if it is a male: for females are positioned in the opposite manner.

As long as it lies in the womb, it is nourished in this way: to each cotyledon, both veins and arteries are attached, supported by flesh, dispersed through the middle regions of the secundines; they finally converge in the umbilicus, from which the fetus continuously draws blood and spirit. Indeed, two arteries can be seen in the umbilicus inserted into the branches of the major artery beneath the loins; and likewise, two veins from the umbilicus converge into one and reach into the vena cava of the liver, so that the blood drawn through these from the veins of the secundines, as if from roots, is further perfected in the fetus's liver and, by a new transformation, becomes

familiar nourishment for it; from here, derived through the vena cava to all directions, it brings nourishment to each part; for all parts receive nourishment from this and thus the fetus is fed, grows, and is perfected.

However, around the ninth month, having grown larger and needing more abundant nourishment and spirit, it no longer tolerates being enclosed. Therefore, it first curls up, inclining its head downward, and offers its legs to the birth canal, extending the rest of its limbs upward—this sometimes occurs one month before birth. Inverting itself in this manner, it breaks nothing, since the umbilical cord is usually about two cubits long, surrounding the fetus in many ways and wrappings. As birth approaches, the fetus, kicking, first ruptures the ἀμνίον (amnion) membrane by frequent pushes with its hands and feet; afterward, with greater force, it twists itself, breaking many cotyledons; at this time, the mother experiences stronger pains in her abdomen. Then the secundines are torn away from the cotyledons and the remaining membranes are also torn and flow out from the womb; and when nothing remains attached, the fetus falls out like a ripe apple from a tree when its stalk is loosened, and thus the woman gives birth to the conceived fetus.

Behold the wonders contained in these words of Sacred Scripture: "Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore a son."

Now we must carefully examine the words the woman spoke when she gave birth, saying: "I have obtained a man through God."

The Hebrew text reads: "I have obtained, or acquired, a man אֶת־יְהוָה (et-YHWH)."

Rabbi Solomon explains this passage as follows: "When," he says, "God created me and my husband, He alone created us. However, in this case, I have participated with Him," meaning: "I have obtained a man with God, because He did not create him alone, as He did us,

but I collaborated with Him." Others interpret it thus: "This son will be a possession of God, and when we die, he will remain in our place to serve Him." Rabbi Abrabanel explains it as: "because of the glory; for if the woman was acquired and made from man, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh the first time, now Cain, a man, is made from the woman Eve, his mother, with the help or assistance of God. And it is not mentioned above that the woman came from man; and behold, now also a man comes from a woman; and this is what she says: 'I have acquired a man,' because she appropriates him to herself and not to his father."

However, if this passage is rightly examined, it appears to suggest something else. For it says: "I have acquired a man, or a man אֶת־יְהוָה (et-YHWH)," that is, the Lord τετραγράμματον (tetragrammaton); so the sense is: "I have acquired a man who is the Lord τετραγράμματον (tetragrammaton)." To make this clearer, we must consider what the Lord said to the serpent above, saying: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head." From these words, the woman understood that the Messiah, the Redeemer, would come, who would crush the head of the devil and liberate man from his captivity and cruel tyranny. She also understood that this Messiah, the Redeemer, would not be a mere human, since He would come to conquer and overcome the strong armed devil and seize his weapons; but every man by nature and power is much weaker than the devil; moreover, every man was already subjected to the power of the devil and made his servant. But He was to be the true God from true God and perfect man, holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens: who nevertheless was to be born from her offspring and be her seed, that is, the seed of the woman; and according to His humanity, He is called the perfect man: but according to His divinity, יהוה (YHWH), the ineffable name suitable only for God.

Eva, therefore, believing that this her firstborn would be the Messiah, filled with immense joy, when she gave birth to her firstborn, said: "I have acquired a man, the Lord τετραγράμματον (tetragrammaton)." Rightly does she call the Messiah both a man and the Lord τετραγράμματον; for by both names Christ is designated through Jeremiah. He is called a man when it says: "The Lord has created a new thing on the earth: a woman shall encompass a man"; and elsewhere He is called the Lord τετραγράμματον, saying: "And this is the name by which He shall be called: The Lord τετραγράμματον, our righteousness." While this would most truly be the case, the woman was not deceived in the understanding of the words; she was, however, mistaken in thinking this about her firstborn son, Cain.

When the parents, beyond their hope, recognized that he was perverse in character and behavior, they began a new birth and begot Abel. This is what follows:

"And again she bore his brother Abel."

How easily human judgment is mistaken is evident here!

It should be noted that Abel is not written with א in Hebrew, but with ה: thus it signifies vanity, not mourning, as many falsely say; it would signify mourning if it were written with א: אבל; but it is not written so, but with הבל (Hevel), vanity, according to the phrase: "Vanity of vanities," where it is הבל (hevel). For the first parents called their firstborn Cain, meaning acquisition or possession; their second-born, Abel, meaning vanity. Although this was so among humans—for Cain remained on the earth, had children, and acquired the goods of the earth, while Abel, killed by his brother, vanished from human sight—before God, it was entirely different. Abel was to be God's possession because of his innocence, righteousness, faith, and charity; but Cain was vanity and nothing before God, who did not regard him or his offerings: and ultimately, he was

condemned for his crimes. In these two brothers, we can contemplate the just and the impious, as in a clear example.

From the fact that it does not add "conceived" here but only says "again she bore," some Hebrews believe that Cain and Abel were twin brothers; but this is of little importance. Others say that twins, a male and a female, were always born, both in the first and the second birth, since Scripture says Cain knew his wife, without any mention of her birth; thus his wife was his sister, born with him; this idea does not displease me. However, some of them say that these brothers were born in paradise, not after they were expelled from it, which is not approved by the Holy Doctors, nor do I approve of it, as many of them do not, even though almost all Hebrews agree that Adam immediately knew his wife after eating from the forbidden tree, when they hid themselves among the trees. But how could they have done so in such fear? Therefore, I believe that the events mentioned here were carried out in the order in which they are narrated here; and just as these things are said to have happened after they were expelled from paradise, so also were they done after the expulsion.

Verse 2: And Abel was a shepherd of sheep, and Cain a farmer.

Hebrew Text: And Abel was a shepherd of sheep, and Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Chaldean: A man who tills the ground.

Since, according to the Lord's decree, the entire human race was to eat bread by the sweat of their brow, therefore, when the sons born of the first parents are presented in the sequence of Scripture, it is immediately narrated what their occupations were by which they earned food to sustain life: Abel, it says, was a shepherd of sheep; innocent, simple, and humble, which was also the life of the patriarchs, who said they were men who shepherded sheep. But Cain

was a man who tilled the ground. Rabbi Abrabanel notes here that Cain took up the art of tilling the ground because he did not fear God and did not heed the curses on the land: "Cursed is the ground because of you," which is said to his father Adam.

However, one might wonder: since the eating of meat was not allowed, why was Abel tending sheep? But sheep are not only for the eating of meat, but for the use of milk, which was not prohibited; for wool and skins, with which they were clothed; and finally for sacrifice, as we read later that Abel offered the fat of his flock to the Lord.

Verses 3 – 5: And it came to pass after many days that Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruits of the earth; but Abel also brought an offering from the firstborn of his flock and their fat, and the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering; but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor; and Cain was very angry and his face fell.

Hebrew Text: And it came to pass at the end of days, Cain brought an offering from the fruits of the earth to the Lord; and Abel also brought from the firstborn of his flock and their fat, etc. And his face fell.

Chaldean Paraphrast renders it exactly so, except for this: And it was the will or favor from the Lord's presence on Abel and his offering; but on Cain and his offering there was no favor, or choice, or heart; and Cain was very angry and his face fell.

Theodotion translated: And the Lord kindled on Abel, etc.

Some of the Hebrews, among whom is Rabbi Abrabanel, explain this passage in this way: when the Scripture set forth the occupations of these brothers, a contention arose between them about which work and art was better and more acceptable to God. For Cain said it was better to be a farmer of the land, providing food for all flesh,

because all other things needed it, but he did not need them: which is a great honor; and that in his work there were many varieties of both plants and fruits and many other things. But Abel on the contrary said that his art was more honorable than Cain's, because Cain's work was only living with life, like sprouts, plants, and fruits: but his own work was living with sense and preeminence, all the more because the land in Cain's work was cursed for man and brought forth thorns and thistles. Nevertheless, the pasture of flocks was not cursed, and therefore he offered the firstborn of his flock and their fat to show their perfections and blessings, because there were things in them which could be eaten, besides meat, butter and milk with dairy products. Furthermore, there is business and management and good honor in itself, so that God is to be called the shepherd of Israel, and the Holy Fathers and King David are to be future shepherds and none of them are farmers of the land. Therefore, when this contention was between them, they said: Let God see and judge. And therefore each offered sacrifices and offerings to the Lord from the fruits of his art: And the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offerings, sending fire from heaven upon them, and not upon Cain and his offerings; or, according to Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, by blessing Abel and not Cain and his works. This is the exposition of the Hebrews.

We, however, explain it in this way. When the first man had recognized that the Supreme God, the Best and Greatest, ought to be acknowledged by all men as the highest lord and the supreme ruler, and that He should be worshipped and revered with holy veneration and the highest adoration, having this knowledge through the inner illumination of God: and when he recognized himself not only as the father of all future generations, from whom every man would derive his origin, but also as the prince and hierarch of the entire human race, to whom he owed the task of providing principles of life, a way of living, good morals, and sacred religion and piety towards God

and those things which pertain to divine law: he not only taught his foremost sons the principles of the arts by which they could earn sustenance for bodily life — for Cain became a farmer of the earth, while Abel was a shepherd of sheep — but he also instructed them in the laws and rights of sacred religion, divine worship, and piety towards God. Firstly, that they might recognize the supreme God and worship Him with mind and heart, in spirit and in truth, and venerate Him with the highest honors, and that they should offer to Him, as the bestower of all things, the gifts they had received from His most generous hand, sacrificing victims and offering sacrifices to obtain their desires and propitiate Him. Therefore, these brothers, not forgetful of their father's teachings, nor deaf listeners but doers of the work, offered gifts to the Lord for divine worship and sanctified their offerings as priests of the most high and supreme God and as worshippers of divine religion.

To understand this passage more clearly, it is necessary to note first that such offerings are sometimes called δῶρα (gifts) by the Septuagint, and sometimes θυσία (sacrifices). Therefore, it must be considered what caused such sacrifices to be instituted, what a sacrifice properly is, and how many types there are. It must be established at the beginning that there are two types of sacrifice: one internal and the other external. The internal sacrifice is nothing other than a certain mental devotion and offering of oneself made to God in recognition of His supreme dominion. The external sacrifice is when what we do mentally is also externally signified and shown: either by voice, which is prayer; or we afflict ourselves with abstinences and mortifications; or finally by martyrdom, which is the highest sacrifice; or when we offer some part of our external goods to God as a sign of confession and praise and in recognition and acknowledgment of His benefits towards us, since everything we have and possess comes from Him.

These external goods that we offer, however, are not properly a sacrifice unless something is done to them by which they are made sacred; for external things are profane; hence it is necessary first to make them sacred and then offer them as a sacrifice. For a sacrifice is something made sacred; and to sacrifice means, according to the etymology of the word, to make a thing sacred. Hence, instead of sacrificing, the Latins say "to make a divine thing." Therefore, for such things to be offered worthily to God, sacred rites, holy prayers, and sacramental ceremonies instituted by God and the Church are required, just as was done in the Old Law.

However, in internal sacrifices, it is not necessary to do anything to make them sacred; for our mind is already made sacred by received grace, and we both consecrate and offer it when we lift it up to God: likewise, our bodies are sanctified by grace — for, according to the Apostle, our members are the members of Christ, and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit — the same judgment applies to those things done concerning our body.

Moreover, it must be noted that there is not just one purpose of sacrifices. For there is a sacrifice of pure praise and confession and thanksgiving, by which we profess that we are subject to God, as in the Old Law was the sacrifice of תודה תרומה (todah terumah), that is, of praise and elevation. There is also a sacrifice of expiation and propitiation, by which the wrath of God and His indignation against us, to punish our sins and avenge divine offense, is appeased; and this sacrifice is called for sin and presupposes sin. Indeed, sin was especially the cause for the institution of these sacrifices. For when our whole race was under sin and hostile to God, it was necessary to institute certain sacrifices to cleanse sins.

But since we were all made enemies of God, who among men could ever be found pleasing to God and beloved, who could stand before Him, perform priestly functions, and be fit to sacrifice, that is, to

make a sacred thing, and could rightfully have this power, when each one was hateful to God, conceived and born in sins? Or what could anyone ever offer to God that would be acceptable and capable of appeasing and propitiating Him, when not only we ourselves, but also all our possessions, were profane and under a curse?

Only one was found who by nature was immune to the curse's merit, who therefore was designated as the victim, the sacrifice, and the priest for us, who did no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth, and He was offered because He willed it, and He bore our sins Himself. Therefore, for the erasure and abolition of the sin of the whole world, one sacrifice was found to be perfect in every way: namely, the most holy and innocent flesh of Christ, to be offered to God on the altar of the cross through His passion and bloody death, so that Christ might offer Himself as an unblemished victim to God for sin, for the redemption of the entire human race: as He did on the cross, whose sacrifice's power would extend throughout the whole world at all times.

For although that sacrifice lasted but a short time, its power is perpetual and infinite, which cannot be exhausted, and it is extended to all times. Hence it is said: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever; because the power of His sacrifice, not only is extended to present and future times but also extends back to previous times in the foreknowledge and foresight of God and in the faith of the Holy Fathers and had power. And all the sacrifices of the ancient Fathers, whether those under the law or those before the law, represented this sacrifice as in types and figures.

And they had no value for the purification and expiation of sin before God by their own merit and virtue; for it was impossible, according to the Apostle, for the blood of animals to take away sins, although they cleansed irregularities and impurities contracted by

the transgression of the law before men: nevertheless, by the power of this victim which they referred to, they could undoubtedly expiate sins. Hence, according to the testimony of the Archprophet, Christ Jesus, the innocent and spotless Lamb, is said to have suffered from the foundation of the world; for by faith in the coming Savior, through the merit of His future passion foreseen by God and represented in those bloody sacrifices, the Holy Fathers, instructed by God to believe and hope for this, received grace and were expiated from sins through those sensible signs of the sacrifices.

In this manner, divine Wisdom led him, who was first formed, away from his sin. For Adam, having received the promise of a Redeemer and Savior from God in the words spoken by God to the serpent, as we explained above, is believed to have offered a sacrifice to God for the expiation of his sin. For besides what we said above, namely that he sacrificed the flesh of those animals to God, from whose skins the Lord made tunics for him and his wife, the Kabbalistic tradition holds that, after receiving angelic consolation and hope of future liberation and salvation, he built an altar in thanksgiving and offered a young bull to God; although this is not recorded in the Holy Scriptures, I nevertheless consider it to be very true.

I believe that the reason why the sacrifice that Adam first offered is not mentioned in the Scriptures is so that he would not be designated as the root and origin of sanctity for all, just as he was noted as the root and origin of sin for all, which role belonged to Christ. In Scripture, Adam generally bore the person of all; but with the birth of sin and the establishment of a new order of state, he was considered a private person, and therefore he sacrificed for himself and his wife, just as any priest would, not as the head and origin of all; and by that sacrifice, he and his wife were cleansed from sin.

And the sacrifice was instituted for the expiation of sin and, otherwise, for divine honor; and in this manner, he taught his sons to

sacrifice and offer gifts to God. Therefore, instructed by their father, the sons offered gifts and sacrifices to the Lord: and Cain, since he was a farmer, offered gifts from the fruits of the earth; Abel, however, a shepherd of sheep, offered from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat portions; and the Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his gifts; but upon Cain and his gifts, He did not look with favor. God is not a respecter of persons, but judges each one according to his merit.

But why did God favor Abel and his offerings, but not Cain and his offerings? It should be remembered here what we mentioned a little earlier, that there are two types of sacrifice: namely, internal and external; and God demands the internal sacrifice from us first and foremost, more than the external one; and the latter can never please Him without the former; and if the former is not pleasing, neither will the latter ever be pleasing. Therefore, since Abel first offered himself to God with all devotion of mind and his person was acceptable to God, God looked upon him and his offerings, inflaming them and his offerings, which is a manifest sign of divine acceptance; as it is believed of the sacrifice of Noah, and the sacrifice of Gideon in the book of Judges, and Solomon's in the book of Chronicles, and Elijah's; the same appears clearly in the holocaust of Aaron. However, since Cain did not please God, neither did his offerings please Him.

But why was the person of Abel pleasing to God, and the person of Cain not? St. John answers in his first epistle, saying that Cain was of the evil one... and his works were evil, but his brother's were righteous, because he was of God. To be of the evil one seems to mean nothing other than to be of the devil, according to the Lord's saying: You are of your father the devil, and you want to fulfill the desires of your father. To be of the devil is not to be understood according to nature, of which God is the author, but according to depraved morals and evil works, of which the devil is the inventor;

and for this reason, he is called the father of sinners; for all iniquity took its origin from him. Abel, however, was a son of God through faith and love.

The Apostle to the Hebrews seems to assign another reason, saying: By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice to God than Cain, through which he obtained testimony that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, he being dead yet speaks. He speaks of faith in Christ, that Abel believed in the coming Christ and therefore offered to God in sacrifice the firstborn of his flock, immaculate lambs, in which sacrifice he recognized, venerated, and worshipped Christ and His passion. Cain, however, was unfaithful and did not have faith in the Redemption; therefore, he could not please God. He indeed believed and worshipped God as Creator, which was almost certainly known in that early origin of the world, but he did not believe in, nor expect, the Redeemer; therefore, he offered from the fruits of the earth, in which creation, not redemption, is evident.

Then, regarding the nature of the offering, Scripture says that Cain offered from the fruits of the earth; not from the first fruits, not from the chosen and best, which are owed to God, but from common fruits and perhaps even from those that were withered or of little value; hence the fruits of the earth are called base or vile. However, Abel offered from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat portions: וּמֵחֶלֶבֶן (umehalebhen), that is, from their fat; חֶלֶב (cheleb) indeed means fat; or from the chosen and best of them; for that word also signifies chosen and best. Therefore, the Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his offerings, but He did not look with favor upon Cain and his offerings. But Cain, envying the favor of his innocent brother, became very angry, and his countenance fell. For envy is accustomed to produce sorrow; therefore, it is said that his countenance fell because of sadness and grief.

Verses 6-7: And the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. Its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Hebrew Text: "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Chaldean Interpreter: "If you do well, will your work not be forgiven or left behind? But if you do not do well, your sin will watch at the appointed time to avenge or punish you if you do not repent. But if you repent, it will be forgiven you."

The Jerusalem Targum also translates this passage with the same sense; it says: "If you do well with your work in this world, it will remain and be left for you in the future world. But if you do not do well with your work in this world, your sin will watch for the day of great judgment and will lie in wait at the door of your heart. However, the power of its evil desire is given into your hand, and you will be its master between merit, or justice, and sin."

The translation of the Septuagint here seems to deviate entirely from the Hebrew truth.

Now let's proceed to the exposition. "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?" The Lord is not asking out of ignorance or unawareness, but rather to arouse Cain to recognize his sin and realize that he is irrationally and unjustly inflamed with anger and affected by sorrow, grieving over his brother's good fortune. "Why do you grieve," He says, "over the good that your brother has received from Me, as if you cannot achieve the same grace? If you do well, will you not be accepted?" which means, will you not receive the reward of good works? However, the Hebrew

text has: "There will be a lifting up, or exaltation"; hence this seems to imply: your countenance has fallen because I have looked with favor on your brother Abel and his offerings, but not on you and your offerings. I did this because your brother's works are good. Therefore, do not be angry or sad that I have preferred your brother over you and that you see him as being preferred. For if you, like him, do well, there will be a lifting up, that is, exaltation and preference: so that as you are naturally older than your brother and excel him by nature, you will also surpass him in honor and dignity, and then you will rejoice and exult, so that your countenance, which now has fallen due to sadness and sorrow, will be lifted up with joy and exultation, with cheerfulness.

But it can also have another meaning. Indeed, the word [שְׂאֵת] (she'et) also sounds like remission, so the meaning could be: "I looked favorably on your brother and his offerings because of his good works; but not on you and your offerings, because your works are evil. But if you turn from your evil way and produce fruits worthy of repentance and do good works, there will be remission, that is, your sins will be forgiven, and then I will look favorably on you and your offerings."

This passage most manifestly and without any evasion demonstrates the freedom of the will and the contingency of predestination and reprobation. For Cain was not predestined; yet the Lord said that if he had done well, he would have received the reward and escaped the eternal damnation, which is the lot of the reprobate. Hence Rabbi Moses Haddarshan explains this passage as follows: "If you do well, you will receive a blessing; if you do not do well, you will receive a curse. But if you do evil, your sin will immediately be at the door." A certainly difficult sentence to explain!

To understand this passage, we must consider what is meant by the name of sin and what is understood by the term door. Sin is properly

a certain depraved and disordered act, which we commit by our own will against God's command and will. Although this act quickly passes, the stain remains, infecting the soul; the guilt remains, the conscience of sin remains, and finally, the penalty to be paid remains. As these effects cause sin to, in a way, live on, they are often designated by the name of sin itself. Sometimes, however, sin is said to be the very desire to sin, which is not extinguished by the act of sin but grows; it always lies at the door, or threshold, of the will, knocking, that is, always beseeching, alluring, and inclining us to evil. By the term door, something well-known and clearly manifest is sometimes designated, as it is often said: "Shall anyone err from the doors?" Sometimes, however, in the Holy Scriptures, the term door signifies judgment, both temporal and ultimate and final; for in ancient times, judgments were held at the gates of the city.

With these points established, the passage is first explained as follows: "If you do evil." These are sins, evil acts committed against God's commandments: "Your sin lies at the door," that is, the conscience of your sin lies in wait at the threshold, that is, the thoughts of your heart will always accuse you. For when we are polluted by crime and wickedness, we are tormented by conscience, which always watches at the doors of our hearts, and whatever we do or intend, it is immediately present to us and never allows us to be happy; it never ceases to rage even temporarily, but after many spans of time, it returns to tear and wound the soul. Therefore, the brothers of Joseph, after many years had passed, were recalled to the memory of their committed crime and were filled with fear of many calamities. This sense is very true, but in my opinion, it is not closely tied to the literal meaning.

Another explanation is: "If you do evil, your sin lies at the door," that is, it will be very well known to me, just like things that are openly visible at the threshold of doors.

A third explanation is: "If you do evil, your sin lies at the door," that is, the conscience and guilt of your sin will watch for punishment, for judgment, to demand from you deserved penalties, and your own conscience will accuse and condemn you in judgment, so that for all the crimes you have committed, you will have to pay the penalty forever. Hear, says God, Cain: if you do well, you will receive the reward and great and highest rewards; but if you do evil, you will pay the penalties for your crimes, your conscience accusing you and the guilt of your sin demanding deserved penalties, you will be judged by me, condemned, punished, and you will pay both temporal and eternal penalties.

This sense is very true and very consonant with the literal meaning: for it maintains both the antithesis and the proper proportion of the opposite to the proposed and the proposed to the opposite; and the Chaldean Paraphrase strongly supports this as well.

However, it could also be explained differently because of what follows: "But its desire is for you, and you shall rule over it," so that by sin is understood that profane lust for desiring, which lies in wait at the threshold of the will, knocking, pleading for the consent of the will, and always enticing towards evil to be fulfilled; yet since it cannot force reason and will, it is therefore said: "Its desire is for you, and you shall rule over it," meaning you must and can rule over it; for it can entice, but it cannot force. The previous explanation is clearer, and in that sense, these words are explained thus: "If you do well, you will receive rewards; if you do evil, you will be judged and condemned to suffer the penalties of your crimes. Indeed, there is in you a desire for evil; for you are angry with your brother and want to kill him, affected by sadness and sorrow over his good and grace. But you can rule over this desire, for it is under you; this desire can creep in and attack, seeking to be fulfilled, so that evil may be committed; but it cannot force: instead, you, as its master, can suppress and restrain it, so that you do not do evil, but good."

However, this passage requires further clarification regarding the fuller understanding of these words; for it seems that God here attributes more to the free will of man than naturally belongs to it, and more than many other passages of Scripture allow. For concerning Cain, who was of the evil one and undoubtedly deprived of God's grace, since his works were evil, because of which God did not look upon him and his offerings, it is said here that the desire was under his control, and he could rule over sin and restrain and suppress it, as if it were placed under his power. Yet many other passages of Divine Scripture most manifestly assert that man cannot do anything, or even a little, without God's grace. For we read in John: "Without me, you can do nothing, as a branch... unless it abides in the vine." The Apostle says: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." Blessed James says that every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. Therefore, to make this passage clearer, we must bring some things to the fore.

First of all, free will derives its name from making rational consideration or discerning what to choose or what to refuse, so that it is called free will, as if it were a free judgment of reason. It is called free because it is placed in its own power, having the free capacity to choose whatever it wants. Although free will, according to the proper meaning of the term, signifies a certain act, namely, the free judgment of reason, according to common opinion, which results from the common usage of speaking, we say and understand free will as that which is the principle of that act by which a person freely judges and chooses.

This principle is a certain free faculty and power of the soul to freely choose whatever is aimed at an end, or whatever it wants; hence free

will is properly not a habit or a power of the soul, but a faculty. It is not a habit, because if it were a habit, it would only be a natural habit; for it is natural for a person to have free will. However, it cannot be a natural habit; for natural habits are directed toward those things to which we are naturally inclined, like the intellect's grasp of first principles: but those things to which we are naturally inclined do not fall under free will; the will necessarily desires them, such as the desire for happiness. Just as the intellect necessarily adheres to first principles, so the will adheres to the ultimate end; for we necessarily desire to be happy, not indeed by necessity of coercion, but by natural necessity: for the necessity of coercion is contrary to the will. Just as it is impossible for something to be both natural and violent, since the violent is what is against the inclination of nature: so it is impossible for something to be both voluntary and coerced; the voluntary is what is according to the inclination of the will: the coerced is what is against the inclination of the will. However, natural necessity does not oppose the will, just as the necessity of the end does not; for the end imposes the necessity of the means: for example, if one wants to cross the sea, one necessarily wants a ship. The will, however, by natural necessity desires the ultimate end, that is, eternal happiness, just as the intellect assents to first principles; but it does not desire other things necessarily, because it is not naturally inclined to other things. Therefore, just as the intellect is related to intelligible things, so the will is related to desirable things.

However, there are certain intelligible things that do not have a necessary connection to first principles, such as contingent propositions, the removal of which does not entail the removal of the principles; and the intellect does not assent to these necessarily. But there are certain intelligible things that have a necessary connection with first principles, such as necessary propositions, the removal of which entails the removal of the first principles and demonstrable conclusions, to which the intellect necessarily assents, having

recognized through demonstration their necessary connection to the principles; however, it does not assent to them before recognizing this necessary connection.

Similarly, the will necessarily adheres to the highest happiness for its own sake; secondly, to those things which have a necessary connection to true happiness, namely, through which a person adheres to God, in whom true happiness lies. However, before the necessity of this connection is demonstrated with certainty, the will does not necessarily adhere to God, nor to the things of God: but the will, having certain knowledge of this necessary connection through the certainty of divine vision, necessarily adheres to God, just as we necessarily desire to be happy. Those particular goods which do not have a necessary connection to happiness, without which one can be happy, the will does not necessarily desire; and these are subject to free will along with those things which indeed have a necessary connection to happiness, but before the certainty of this necessary connection: since the will is not naturally inclined to these.

Therefore, free will cannot be a natural habit.

Nor can it be an unnatural habit, since it is natural for a person to have free will; hence it is against its nature to be an unnatural habit, and it is against its proper rationale to be a natural habit; for its proper rationale is that it has dominion over its own actions and is directed toward either option: which does not pertain to a natural habit. Therefore, it is not a habit.

Nor is it properly a power; for if it were a power of the soul, since it is rational, it would either be the intellect or the will: for rational powers are sufficiently divided into the intellectual and affective. But it cannot be the intellect; for the intellect is not a free power, but a natural one, and it operates purely naturally; hence it is not the master of its own acts, just as the sun is not the master of its own heating or illuminating. Nor can it be the will; for the will cannot

have judgment, just as the intellect cannot have freedom. Therefore, since free will implies both judgment and freedom according to its name, it cannot be the intellect due to its lack of freedom, nor can it be the will due to its lack of judgment.

However, since the proper function of free will is choice, for we are said to have free will because we can choose one thing while rejecting another, the nature of free will is considered from the perspective of choice. In choice, two aspects are always clearly observed: intellect and affection; the intellect by advising and judging what should be preferred; the will by desiring and accepting what has been judged through counsel. Hence, choice is said to be either an appetitive intellect or more properly an intellectual appetite; for the proper object of choice is what is for the end, insofar as it has the rationale of useful good; therefore, according to the Philosopher, choice is called "*desiderium consiliabile*" (deliberate desire).

But although both the will and the intellect contribute to choice, it is principally an act of the will, since its object is useful good, which is the object of the appetitive power. However, because the will does not incline towards this object unless it is pre-known and understood, the intellect accompanies the will as a counselor, showing and demonstrating the nature of the thing to be chosen.

With these points established, the nature of free will becomes clear. Since free will results in choice as its proper act, and choice itself consists both in the will and in the intellect, it is evident that free will itself also consists in these very powers, encompassing both reason and will. Since it is neither a habit nor a power, as previously deduced, it will be a certain faculty of reason and will to freely choose whatever it wants; for the intellect cannot achieve this by itself, because it is a natural, not a free power; nor can the will by itself, because it cannot arbitrate and judge. Therefore, the faculty of

free will is caused by the concurrence of reason and will: just as the faculty and power to pull a ship is caused by the combined strength of two men, to which neither is sufficient by itself; and the power to write results from the combined strength of the hand and the eye, to which neither alone is sufficient.

Thus, from the conjunction of the intellect and will results the faculty of free will and the power of choosing; hence it is aptly named by the dual term, with one part attributed to the will and the other to reason: "free" expresses the will, and "will" expresses reason. However, the principle of free will resides more in the will than in the intellect. For man is not master of his actions through the intellect, since that power is not free but acts merely naturally, but through the will, which is free, and which operates contingently and indifferently, through which we earn merit and demerit: in which charity resides. And it is ultimately the will that, by its command, moves all the powers of the soul, including the intellect; for it regards the universal good and the end as its object: the power that regards the universal end moves the powers that regard particular ends. Just as a king, who intends the universal good of the whole kingdom, moves by his command those appointed to the care of governance in individual cities or provinces: so the will moves the other powers of the soul that are subject to free will — not all powers are subject to free will, such as natural, vegetative powers — to their acts and operations; and it also moves the intellect itself to the knowledge of truth or of any other thing. For this reason, in evil thoughts, sin is sometimes imputed, because the will either commands or accepts them.

When, therefore, we say that free will is a faculty of the will and reason to choose, the will is placed as the principal, and the intellect as the accompanying. For reason dictates what should be done, but the will commands; hence the intellect is like a counselor, while the will is like a commander. Even though right reason is the rule and

norm for free will and the will for acting rightly, so that an act deviating from right reason is called evil, the whole rationale of dominion and power resides in the will; this is because reason is the counselor of the will. Thus, just as a king acts wrongly if he either does not follow the good and right counsel of his counselor or acts against it: yet all the dominion rests with the king; so it is with reason and will. For the freedom of the will is so great that it often operates even against the judgment of right reason: although this is more a defect of freedom than freedom itself. Hence, in the Gospel of Luke, we read about the servant who knew his master's will but did not do it, and thus deserved many stripes. This is why there is a sin of certain malice distinct from sin out of ignorance. Thus, Blessed Peter writes about those for whom the latter state has become worse than the former: "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." Therefore, free will primarily consists in the will. It is, therefore, a certain free faculty of the will and reason to choose freely whatever it wills.

Its liberty does not properly consist in the fact that it can choose the opposite of what it wills; that is, it does not choose the good in such a way that it can also choose evil. For in God, angels, and the blessed, there is free will, who cannot will and choose evil; and, as has already been said, the desire for evil is an abuse and defect of liberty. But it properly consists in this, that whatever it wills, it desires by its own command, because it wills thus, and wills to will, and takes pleasure in it, and moves itself in the act of willing and governs its own actions. Hence, although the blessed necessarily love God and cannot not love Him, and so strongly reject sin that they cannot will it: they do all this freely, because they will to will and not will.

And so free will is also concerned with what is necessary; however, with regard to deliberation, it only pertains to contingents. For no one deliberates about what is necessarily so or impossibility otherwise: but about those things that can be otherwise, one deliberates; and thus, it always refers to the future, which is contingent, not to the present or past. For what is present is determined, and it is not in our power for it to be or not to be, when it is; it can indeed not be or be something else afterward: but it cannot not be while it is, or be something else while it is what it is; but in the future, whether this or that will happen, that pertains to the power of free will.

Nevertheless, not all future events fall under the power of free will: only those which can be done or not done by free will; for if someone wills and plans to do something that is in no way within their power, they would be considered foolish.

Having seen the nature of free will, we must now consider its power, what and how much it can do. The primary power of free will is that it cannot be forced by any agent, either created or uncreated, with regard to its own proper act, which is the internal act. For as to the external act, it can be coerced, such as by forcing someone to bend their knees before an idol or to burn incense with their own hands; but with respect to the internal act, which is willing and choosing, it can indeed be induced, moved, and hindered: but it cannot be coerced. It can be induced by effective punishments, persuasions, promises, terrors, threats, inclinations toward sorrowful things, or blandishments of delightful things, which can incline free will toward something; and thus it can be induced both by the creature and by God.

Secondly, it can be moved by God, or altered, while it is indeed directed by its own powerful force towards one thing; but God can instill in it an affection for another thing, or even the opposite, which it accepts: thus God makes a person who is overly fond of temporal things a despiser of them and a lover of heavenly things.

It can be impeded by bodily injury due to its connection and inclination toward corporeal nature; hence many, because of bodily injury, become insane and are hindered from the act of free will. For although rational powers, since they come from without and are not derived from material potency, are not mixed with the body, nor do they use a bodily organ to elicit their acts; nevertheless, since the rational soul is united to the body to constitute a third entity, which is one in essence and to which operation is properly due because it is one, this operation is not only to live or sense, or move, but also to reason and understand. Therefore, the soul, as long as it is in the body, does not entirely understand apart from the body, even if not through the body, as it exercises its prior operations. For two things concur in the act of understanding: the reception of species and judgment: and the reception of species is indeed from the body; for received through the bodily senses, they reach up to the active intellect, by which they are made intelligible, and the possible intellect, by which they are understood, which also judges. But for this to happen, a proper disposition of the body is required. Just as, even if the soul does not depend on the body, for it to be in the body, the body must be properly constituted, and upon the corruption of this constitution, the soul may no longer be in the body; so for the soul to understand in the body, the optimal disposition of the bodily senses is necessary; if this disposition is impaired, the intellect cannot understand or judge; and thus the act of free will is impeded, while its nature and proper rationale remain intact.

Therefore, it can be impeded, but it cannot be coerced at all; for to be coerced means to be moved and compelled by some external force, against and contrary to the deliberative will's inclination, while such repugnance remains, to be inclined and to will something. This, however, is impossible. Just as it is impossible for something to be natural, that is, according to the inclination of nature, and violent, that is, contrary to the inclination of nature: so it

is impossible for something to be voluntary and free, that is, according to the inclination of the will, and coerced, that is, contrary to the inclination of the will. Therefore, since it is entirely impossible, neither any creature nor God can coerce free will. I do not say that God could not remove its freedom: for this He can do by the immensity of His power; but if He were to remove its freedom, He would also destroy its nature. But I say that, with its nature and the property of its freedom preserved, it is impossible and unintelligible that free will can be coerced.

Regarding its power in operations, free will can be considered in three ways: either in purely natural conditions, or with the general influence and assistance of God's grace. For God is the cause of all positive effects of particular causes: it is not the fire alone that burns, but God with the fire: and every thing indeed operates, but simultaneously with God concurring in such an operation; so God concurs with necessary causes necessarily according to His ordination, with contingent causes contingently, with natural causes naturally, with free causes freely; thus, for any operation of free will, God concurs with a general influence on man.

Therefore, the primary power of free will, considering its proper act, cannot be coerced by any created or uncreated agent. As for its external act, it can be coerced, but its internal act, which is willing and choosing, cannot be coerced. This is because coercion would involve some force moving and compelling the will against its inclination, which is impossible. Thus, even though rational powers do not derive from material potency and are not mixed with the body, the rational soul is united with the body to constitute a single essence, which properly requires the operation of reasoning and understanding. Hence, the soul, while in the body, understands not entirely apart from the body but not through the body, and this operation involves a proper disposition of the bodily senses, without

which the intellect cannot understand or judge, thereby impeding the act of free will, while preserving its nature and rationale.

Secondly, it can be considered with the special gift and influence of sanctifying grace, in so far as it is free from guilt; and ultimately from misery, and this is the liberty of glory, which is reserved for us in our homeland, and is in all the blessed. Free will, taken in this third way, being the most perfect, is closely united with the highest good, the ultimate end, and true beatitude, and its works are entirely perfect, so that it can only do good; it not only can avoid doing evil but also, due to perfect and consummate grace, cannot do evil at all. Therefore, it is the most free and much freer than it was in our first parents, because it is entirely free from that servitude of which it is said: "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin"; and the further it is from this servitude, the freer its judgment in choosing the good.

In the present state, as endowed with the special gift of grace, in our first parents before the fall, they could indeed do good with great perfection and ease: they could also avoid doing evil, but they could not entirely lack the potential to do evil; they were very free because they could desire and choose the good that reason determined, not only without coercion and necessity but also free from all guilt and misery, with all ease. Yet, they were not entirely free from the potential to sin: they could avoid sinning, but they had the potential to sin. In us, however, free will with the gift of grace is more imperfect; for it can indeed sin, but it cannot avoid sinning, at least venially, according to the saying: "A righteous person falls seven times a day"; and in John: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"; and since venial sin is incurred without full deliberation, a person in this life cannot be free from all such occurrences, though they can avoid individual sins, and because they do not avoid them, they incur sin.

However, in regard to doing good, it can, through elicited acts accompanied by the habit of the grace of charity, merit an increase and finally attain glory; as St. Paul says to Timothy: "Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day ...; and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." What is awarded to someone according to justice is deserved with due merit. This, however, is not according to nature itself and insofar as such works proceed from free will alone; for such works cannot merit the blessed life simply on their own: "For the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"; but they can do so by the institution of the legislator: just as a king could institute that as much be given for a penny as for gold; and also by the gift of grace. And because such works proceed from the Holy Spirit dwelling in a justified person by grace and moving that free will to meritorious works, and insofar as such a work proceeds from the Holy Spirit, who is of infinite worth, it merits the infinite good, that is, eternal life. Hence, St. Paul says to the Romans: "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope; and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." He then added: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God." He says "much more"; for free will merits justification congruously: but through justification, it merits glory with due merit.

If, however, we finally consider free will deprived of this kind of grace, but only in pure natural conditions, with general assistance and the influx of grace, it is most imperfect. First of all, it is deprived of grace. Since in this state it is necessarily under some sin, either original or actual, or both, it cannot by its own power rise

from sin; it is necessary for God to remit its guilt and bestow grace: and this it cannot merit with due merit; for if grace were of merit, then grace, as the Apostle says, would no longer be grace.

Secondly: it cannot meritoriously avoid mortal sin, as follows: it can indeed simply avoid the act of sin; for full deliberation is required for sin to occur: and to deliberate is compelled by no power, nor can it be compelled, since by sin it does not lose freedom in its essence. Therefore, since sin is voluntary, such that if it is not voluntary, it is not sin, and the will in it is still free to choose either way, it can both commit and avoid sin. But I say that it cannot avoid sin meritoriously; for the principle of merit is grace and charity, which it does not have.

Thirdly: free will, as such, can indeed elicit a meritorious act in general motion without grace, but not meritoriously. For the philosophers posited and had acts of moral virtues without having grace: yet they did not merit anything, since the principle of merit is grace, which they did not have; and the Hebrews still have a zeal for God and do many good works of the law, though they are destitute of grace; and many sinners perform many works of faith and mercy, yet remain in sin.

Fourthly: it cannot elicit an act meritoriously deserving of eternal life. For from pure natural conditions, one cannot be worthy of eternal life; thus the Lord, when speaking of obtaining eternal life, said to Blessed Matthew: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible"; and thus those passages are to be understood: "Without me, you can do nothing"; and: "We are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves"; and all similar statements, that we can do nothing worthy of eternal life without grace.

Fifth: although free will cannot rise from sin and condignly merit grace, it can nonetheless do so from congruity and decency; for

attrition and contrition for sin are acts that are congruously worthy of grace. Through contrition, or at least attrition, one can dispose oneself to receive grace at any time; without any special influx, but from pure natural inclinations and general influence, one can be affected by the displeasure, sorrow, and repentance for a committed crime, and thus be prepared to obtain grace. However, God, who wills all men to be saved and none to perish, always offers them grace liberally; for it is written: "I stand at the door and knock: if anyone... opens to me..., I will come in... and dine with him"; indeed, He even anticipates free will with His gratuitous mercy, as it is said through the Psalmist: "His mercy will come before me"; and elsewhere: "Let your mercy come quickly to meet us, O Lord." Therefore, if free will, affected by sorrow for a committed crime, and through contrition or attrition consents to the grace that God most liberally offers, it will undoubtedly obtain the grace that justifies and will be made worthy of eternal life; but if it resists God and refuses and rejects the offered grace, it will make itself guilty of the fire of hell and eternal death: for if it does not fulfill all the divine commands, which it cannot fulfill without the gift of grace, so that it may worthily attain eternal life, it is certain that it cannot be excused or defended that impossible things are commanded of it, which it cannot worthily fulfill by its own strength without the gift of grace. For God continually provides and always offers the help of grace; if one does not have it so that they can worthily fulfill what they otherwise cannot keep, it is their fault because they do not want to have it and dispose themselves to receive the offered grace, so that they may be justified. Therefore, since God's grace is always present and assists us when we are willing, but is absent when we are unwilling, it is almost in our power to worthily keep the precepts: for it is always in our power to dispose ourselves to grace and to worthily give assent to what is offered; when we do this, we always obtain grace. Therefore, the Lord said in Matthew: "Either

make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad." For we make the tree good, which produces good fruit and cannot produce bad fruit, when we open to God knocking through the contrition of the heart and assent to the grace offered by consenting and through proper disposition, removing the obstacle, receiving it through justification.

Having seen these things, the understanding of the present passage will be clear and evident. For when the Lord says to Cain: "Its desire shall be for you, and you shall rule over it," although Cain had free will, even if deprived of grace, it was still within his free power to curb the desire of sin so that it would not come into action; which indeed can be done without the gift of grace, as it has been seen. But it is true that he could not do it worthily and with the merit of eternal life without the gift of justifying grace; but if the Lord understood it thus, He said that he could both curb and overcome sin insofar as He freely offered His grace to him and it was within Cain's power to give worthy assent to the offered grace, by which he could meritoriously curb the desire of sin and entirely avoid sin. Thus, what was said above is also to be understood: "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" That is, you will receive a reward. Not that Cain could worthily merit without grace; but because he could assent to the grace offered by the Lord and receive grace by disposing himself, with which he could both do good deeds worthily and merit eternal life.

Many other things could be noted in this place, especially concerning the contingency of predestination and reprobation; although Cain was not predestined but reprobate, the Lord nevertheless says to him: "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" indicating that the Lord does not entirely abandon the reprobate but exhorts them to good so that they may receive a reward; and many other things, which we leave to be treated at a more opportune and serious time.

Verse 8: And Cain said to Abel...: Let us go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Hebrew text: And Cain said to Abel his brother... And it came to pass when they were in the field, Cain rose up, etc.

So exactly does the Chaldean Interpreter.

However, the Jerusalem Targum translates this passage in a paraphrastic manner as follows: And Cain said to Abel his brother: Come and go out to the surface of the field. And it came to pass when they both went out to the surface of the field, Cain responded and said to Abel his brother: There is no judgment and there is no judge, and there is no other world, and there is no good reward for righteousness, nor is there retribution for iniquity: and the world was not created in mercy, and the ruler or leader is not merciful. For why was your offering accepted by Him with goodwill, and mine was not accepted with His favor? Abel answered and said to Cain: There is judgment and there is a judge and there is another world and there is the expectation of good reward for righteousness and retribution for iniquity: and the world was created in mercy and the ruler or leader is merciful. Nevertheless, in the fruits of good works, He accepted my right works more than yours; my offering was accepted by Him with goodwill, and yours was not accepted with goodwill. And they both were in the field arguing. And Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. All these things are from the Jerusalem Targum; which indeed is a most beautiful paraphrase.

However, the Greek Edition of the Vulgate agrees with ours; for it has: Καὶ εἶπε Κάιν πρὸς Ἀβελ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον (Kai eipe Kain pros Abel ton adelphon autou: Dielthomen eis to pedion): that is: And Cain said to Abel his brother: Let us go into the field.

Now let us approach the exposition of this passage. And Cain said to Abel. In Hebrew, there is an ellipsis or aposiopesis here; for it is not expressed what Cain said to his brother. We read a similar manner in 2 Kings: And David said on that day: Whoever strikes down the Jebusite: which our Translation has: David had proposed ... a reward for him who strikes down the Jebusite. Some of the Hebrews say that he assailed him with insults, reproaches, and injurious words; after which, still seething with anger, he killed him. Our Translation, along with the Greek, has it that he said to him: Let us go out; this paraphrase is not to be despised.

However, to me, after these, the Chaldean Paraphrase is very appealing. The text of the speech, according to the Hebrew Truth, seems to express that Cain said to his brother whatever the Lord had said to him, rebuking him, and he related all those words to his brother, as if Abel had been the cause of that reproof; therefore, inflamed with excessive fury against him, he rose up and killed him. A foolish and entirely insane and virulent thought had crept into Cain's mind. For he believed that his brother Abel had been the cause that the Lord did not look upon him and his offerings; not considering that his offerings were altogether unworthy to be regarded and accepted by God as pleasing. Therefore, he said in his heart: I will remove my brother from the midst, and then God will look upon me and my offerings and bless me, as He has blessed my brother. But his thought deceived him entirely; hence it follows:

Verses 9 – 12: And the Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? He answered: I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And He said to him: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now therefore you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; a fugitive and a wanderer you shall be on the earth.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? And he said: I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? And He said: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. And now you are cursed more than the earth, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth.

Chaldean Interpreter: The voice of the blood of the offspring, or children, who were to come from your brother, cries out before me from the ground.

Jerusalem Targum similarly has: The voice of the blood of the righteous multitudes, who were to arise from Abel your brother.

Greek Vulgate Edition almost entirely agrees with ours. However, it has: And now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand, for when you work the ground it will no longer give you its strength: στένων καὶ τρέμων ἔσῃ, that is, you will be sighing and trembling on the earth.

Now let us proceed to the exposition. Where is Abel your brother? Sacred Scripture narrates that God, holy and blessed, always most just and the most severe avenger of all sin, rightly rebuked Cain for the crime he had committed in the shedding of his brother's blood and justly punished him so that the evil would not remain unpunished and the disgrace of guilt would not be without the dignity of justice. At the same time, it shows that He is aware of and knows all deeds, both those that occur in the deepest thoughts of the heart; and although the human heart is deceitful and inscrutable, He examines the hearts and tests the minds. Hence, when He perceived the innermost hidden thoughts of Cain's most wicked heart, He asked him where his brother was. For foolishly foolish Cain thought that since he had killed his brother with no one present or seeing,

God too would be unaware; therefore, he replied: I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?

Among the Hebrews in Bereshit Rabba, as attested by Rabbi Abrabanel, Cain is said to have committed three sins on that day. The first is that he did not believe the words of God when He rebuked him; the second is that he killed Abel, his brother; and the third is that he lied and said: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" Here, both his lie and arrogance are shown: "Why," he says, "do you inquire of me about my brother, where he is? Did you entrust him to my care or oversight? Why should it concern me to know where he is?" God expected Cain to bear good fruit; instead, he did evil, like a vineyard expected to produce grapes but instead produced wild grapes. God inquired of Cain about his brother, so that by the inquiry He might bring the crime and cruel deed he had committed before his eyes, so that Cain might repent of such a great sin and, recognizing his guilt, humbly seek forgiveness from God in penitence. But he, becoming harder and more obstinate, not only did not acknowledge his guilt, but with shameless boldness and unbridled arrogance, responded proudly and foolishly, considering God ignorant of the deed, since with fleshly eyes He had not seen him present when he killed his brother; but with the eyes of the mind, by which God is seen, he was entirely blind.

The Lord, seeing both his foolishness and wickedness, said: "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." "Do you think," He said, "that I am unaware of what you have done to your brother? And what is this voice crying in my ears, by which the voice of your brother's blood, whom you killed, cries out to me from the ground?"

In Hebrew, it is written: קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן־הָאֲדָמָה, that is: "The voice of the blood of your brother cries out to me from the ground,"

or: "The voices of the blood of your brother cry out to me from the ground," where דְּמַי (d'mei) is in the plural form.

The Hebrew masters say that blood is used in the plural to signify the blood both of Abel himself and of his descendants, whom he would have begotten if he had remained in the world. And so God said to Cain that he not only shed the blood of one man, but almost the entire habitation of men, who would have descended through Abel's line. The Hebrews believe that the whole human race was to be propagated through these two sons of Adam, and Adam had already ceased from generating. This opinion is confirmed by both Chaldean paraphrases.

Rabbi Solomon says that this is because Cain inflicted many wounds on his brother Abel, because he did not know from where his soul would depart, and therefore it is said: "The voice of the bloods," because of the blood that flowed here and there.

However, some of our interpreters explain this passage as if God wanted to show Cain that his sin was so evident and manifest to Him, as if his blood were crying out with a loud voice to heaven.

But we believe this passage should be explained differently. By "blood," we specifically understand the soul of Abel. For man, who consists of body and soul, with the body being visible and the soul hidden within, is called by the Hebrews בָּשָׂר וּדָם (basar ve'dam), that is, flesh and blood; and so we understand that phrase in the Gospel of Matthew, which is entirely in Hebrew idiom, since it was written in Hebrew, when the Lord said to Peter, who was giving testimony of His divinity: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." By "flesh" He meant the body, which is visible externally, and by "blood" the soul, which is hidden within.

Thus also the Lord said to Noah, when He gave him and all his sons all the fish of the sea... and everything that moves and lives on the earth, as green plants to eat, except, He said, "you shall not eat flesh with its blood," that is, man. For it immediately follows: "For I will demand your lifeblood; I will demand it from every animal; and from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind." Here it is clearly seen that by "blood" He means the soul. Therefore, Moses in Deuteronomy strongly warned them not to eat the flesh with the blood of even animals, saying: "Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh."

Therefore, by the blood crying out to God here, we understand the soul of Abel, which does not cry out with a voice, but with reason, asking to be avenged on the wicked brother who persists in iniquity and wickedness. As we read in Revelation: "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?'" Thus indeed Abel cries out to the Lord with a loud voice; and so, as the Apostle testifies, though he is dead, he still speaks, manifesting before God the wickedness of his brother. "See," he says, "you, Lord, who are just and true, what my brother has done to me: what a heinous crime, what an abominable deed, a new and rare slaughter brought upon human life by his own hand. For he has brutally killed me, a simple, just, and innocent man, his own brother, who never did him any harm, not even speaking a word that could hurt him. He killed me solely because of my good work, because I pleased you, because I offered acceptable gifts to you, because I lived piously and innocently, because I bore witness to the truth to him. He killed me!

And not just me, but also all those who, by your grace, would have come forth from my loins: a pious, holy, and just people, dedicated to your worship, who could rightly be called your children. See, therefore, Lord, the intolerable madness, the heinous crime, the inexpressible deed, the intolerable guilt. Avenge my blood, or better, my bloods; for he killed both me and my future offspring."

I believe the Lord responded: "Rest a little while, O just and innocent Abel, until the number of your fellow servants and brothers who are to be killed as you were, for the sake of justice and the testimony of the truth, is completed. For together with them you will be clothed with the white robe of immortality for your unjust death and will enjoy eternal joys, as the very first martyr and the first witness of the truth. As for your children who would have been born with you, I will raise up another seed for your father in your place." - For it is written: "God has granted me another offspring in place of Abel, whom Cain killed," from whom the holy nation descended, which first began to invoke the name of the Lord, from whom they deserved to be called the sons of God.

Therefore, this passage, carefully considered, shows that Abel, though dead in body, is still alive and speaking in spirit; his body was indeed killed by the nefarious murder of Cain, but his soul could not be killed; it still lives immortally, never to perish. Therefore, it is fitting to bring forward some arguments here concerning the immortality of the soul.

For today many deny its immortality, but think and affirm that it dies along with the body, because they read in Ecclesiastes: "The fate of men and beasts is the same...; man has no advantage over the beast"; and the Apostle also says that only God has immortality. Moreover, some, deluded by the appearances of natural reasons, argue that the soul depends on phantasms in its operations and needs them, and since phantasm, without which they think nothing can be

understood, is not without the body, they argue that the soul cannot remain when the body is destroyed. Furthermore, they argue that everything that is born and begins to exist must necessarily perish and cease to be; and the soul began to exist; hence they posit that the soul will altogether perish with the body, just like the souls of any brute animals. But the wisdom of these people is foolishness and madness, like that of brute animals, who do not understand the things of God and therefore, because they live like brute animals, they also think that their soul will perish with the body like that of the brutes.

However, the Catholic truth and faith have determined that the soul indeed began with the body, created by God and infused into the body as its essential form and life, giving it life and movement; but after the body, it will remain perpetually immortal by itself until it is reunited with the body in the universal resurrection, as the Holy Church, the pillar of truth, determined under anathema at the Council of Vienne and Lateran under Leo X. It is also stated in the Clementine, *De Summa Trinitate et Fide Catholica*, in the sole chapter.

This truth, besides being affirmed by the authority of the universal Church, is also fortified by the authority of Sacred Scripture, the holy Doctors, and the universal school of theologians with the most solid defenses of reasons and authorities; it was also the opinion of rightly thinking philosophers among the pagans; and finally, it is supported by the records of theological, moral, and even natural reasons.

First of all, the rational soul being the form of the body, beyond what has been determined in the aforementioned places, is evident also from the opinion of the philosophers, who defined it as the act of a physical, organic body potentially having life. This is because if it were not the informing form of the body, man would truly not be

man; for the form is what gives being to the thing. Note that it was the opinion of St. Gregory of Nyssa that the soul is not the form of the body; but this is not held.

That it is immortal and remains after the body, Christ first proved against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, the spirit, and the angel, saying: "Have you not read: I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Since the Lord said these words in Exodus, those Patriarchs were already dead, and were not: if therefore nothing of them lived, then God is said to be the God of nothing. But the relation of the creature to God is real; therefore of an existing thing: something of them therefore existed, not composite, not body; for the body was no longer, but their corpses were corrupt: therefore the souls lived. Then, in Matthew, the Lord says: "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." But it would be too much to bring forth all the testimonies of the New Testament.

In the Old Testament this is also evident. Solomon, in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, speaking of man's death, says: "The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." What Solomon said elsewhere: "The fate of men and the fate of animals is the same," etc., he said from the perspective of the foolish, who speak in Wisdom thus: "The time of our life is short and tedious, and there is no rest in the end of man; and no one has been known to return from the dead. We are born of nothing, and after this we shall be as though we had never been; for the breath in our nostrils is smoke." To which Wisdom responds: "The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment of death will touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die, but they are at peace."

The Hebrew Doctors all assert that Solomon spoke there from the perspective of the foolish, as he himself said: "I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men." Hence Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra, on that passage, says: "This verse is according to the thoughts of the sons of men, who do not have wisdom and understanding; seeing that the same fate befalls both man and animal, they think they have the same spirit, and that man does not excel the other living beings." The Hebrew gloss on the verse "Who knows if the spirit of the sons of men goes upward and the spirit of the animals goes downward to the earth?" takes it to mean "because," for the Hebrew word can signify both, and thus explains the passage: "Who is mindful, that is, who considers that the spirit of man goes upward to divine judgment, to give account?" The firm opinion and faith of all the Hebrews is that the rational soul is immortal, and the universal resurrection is a future article of faith among them, just as it is among us.

This same truth is evident and clear from the common opinion of all Catholics. For St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the pinnacle and summit of theological discipline, in the fourth chapter of "On the Divine Names," among the many attributes which the soul received from the Supreme Good, enumerates immortality, because it has intellectual virtue, and thus essential and immortal life. St. Augustine, in his book "On the Immortality of the Soul," both affirms and seriously proves the same thing at length. I omit the very true common opinion of all theologians who prove this very widely.

As for the pagan philosophers, Plato, the prince of the Academics, expressly teaches the immortality of the soul in the "Timaeus." The Stoics and Pythagoras held the same opinion, as Plutarch reports. Aristotle also seems to express this view in his works "On the Soul." For in Book 2, he says: "But concerning the intellect and the speculative power, nothing is yet clear; but it seems to be another kind of soul, and this alone can be separated, as the eternal from the

perishable." In Book 3, speaking of the intellect, he says: "Separated, this alone is what it is, and this alone is immortal and eternal." In Book 12 of the "Metaphysics," after stating that the soul, or the form moving the body, is not before the body, but with the body, as health is when man is healthy, and the form of the bronze sphere is when the bronze sphere itself exists, he adds that the soul, not every part of it, but the intellect, remains afterward, and nothing prohibits this. Many of Aristotle's interpreters hold the same opinion, which would be too lengthy to enumerate individually.

Let us approach the reasons, first proposing a certain universal axiom from the common conception of the mind, from which we may draw conclusions. It is that all things are known from their operations, and these directly indicate their nature. For the operation of a thing is such as its nature must be, since the operation arises from the nature; and if the operations are the same in species, we conclude that the things are the same in species; and if they have different operations, they are different in species. Moreover, operations show the powers and their virtues from which they proceed, as well as their proper nature; if there is an operation, it proceeds from some principle and properly from its own. Thus, from the acts we investigate and conclude the powers and from the powers the nature of the thing, indeed we demonstrate it; just as natural things are known by motion and demonstrated from motion.

Therefore, if this is so, the soul will be known from its works and acts; and equally its immortality and its existence and separation from the body. For if it has some operations that do not depend on the body, nor are received by a bodily organ, it will be a certain and evident argument that it is separable from the body and spiritual, as it has immaterial and spiritual operations separate from the body; on the other hand, if there are no such operations, it cannot be separated from the body and remain. Thus Aristotle, in the first book of "De Anima," conjecturing the nature of the soul, says: "If there is any

operation or passion proper to the soul, it will necessarily be separable; but if there is nothing proper to it, it will not be separable." But certainly many operations of the rational soul are proper to it, not at all depending on the body or phantasm.

And first: concerning the operations of the intellect. For when the mind understands God, intelligences or angels, invisible and eternal things, itself and its own acts, these acts of understanding are indeed separate from the body, since they do not depend on phantasm; for spiritual things are not subject to phantasms.

Furthermore, faith and the acts of faith, not only in which we believe divine things but also in which we accept human things on someone's authority, are separate acts and above the senses. For the intellect in believing is not convinced by senses or reasons; not by reasons, for then it would be knowledge or opinion, not faith; nor by senses, for although all the sensitive acts and every rational action of the agent are posited, the intellect is not compelled to believe; we believe because we will and because the intellect wants to assent to someone's authority. Therefore, faith is a separate act.

Moreover, there are many other operations of the intellect that the senses cannot effect, such as reasoning, constructing syllogisms, dividing, defining, ordering, numbering, composing, and making propositions, knowing universals, and many others that the senses cannot effect; but these are operated by another power, that is, the spiritual intellect, and thus by a spiritual essence, of which it is a spiritual power: for as the operation is, so is the power, and as the power is, so is the essence. Although the intellect cannot accomplish these without the help of the senses and the presentation of phantasms, once these are in place, the intellect itself accomplishes these by its own means; for it illuminates the phantasms and elicits intelligible species from the phantasms. The intelligible species

received by the intellect are contemplated by the intellect itself without any assistance; therefore, that act is separate.

Furthermore, it understands many things that do not have phantasms to move the intellect, but only to terminate; as all relations are understood without having a species. Therefore, that act does not depend on the body, since it is not received from a phantasm.

Moreover, the soul, besides the natural way of understanding, which mostly happens through phantasms received by the senses, can understand many things through the influence and motion of a higher cause: by God through revelation and infusion of knowledge and intelligible species; just as intelligences are separate from the body. Certainly, this mode of understanding will be without doubt separate from the body and senses, since it is not from a phantasm, but from God and divine light. Therefore, this operation of the intellect will be separate from the body. Hence, if the soul has this proper operation, it will indeed be separable from the body, so as to remain.

Moreover, many operations of the will are separate. For in the will, to will and not to will is above all sense and above all sensitive appetite; the will commands and dominates the sense and the sensitive appetite, and it often wills against the sensitive appetite, as is evident in the continent person, who restrains and curbs the appetites so that they do not run rampant unchecked.

Furthermore, many virtues reside in the will, which cannot in any way be in the sense, such as love of God, fear and reverence of God, piety towards God and devotion, hope in God, etc. The senses cannot rise to such things nor desire them. Therefore, those acts of the will towards God and divine things do not depend on the body; they are therefore proper to the will.

Next, the will is free and master of its actions; for it moves itself first to act. Whatever moves itself first and cannot be moved by another creature naturally by a natural motion is eternal and cannot perish. For if it were to perish, it would certainly be by some natural agent moving it naturally, effectively, and violently. But the will cannot be moved in this way to its action because it is free; therefore it cannot be moved to the corruption of its essence or existence; just as its operation cannot be hindered, so neither can its essence or the existence of its essence. And just as no necessity or force from any creature can be inflicted upon the will, so neither upon its essence; for, as we have said, as the operation and power of the thing are, so is its essence, nature, and existence.

Moreover, the rational soul has the virtue of reflecting upon itself together with its powers. For the soul wills to understand itself and understands that it wills, and remembers that it has willed and understood, and understands and wills to remember. Thus, the intellect reflects upon the will, and the will upon the intellect, and both upon memory, and vice versa. Indeed, the intellect turns and reflects upon itself: for it understands that it understands; and the will equally wills that it wills; and memory remembers that it remembers. Certainly, all these occur without the help of the senses and without phantasms: for there are no phantasms for these acts. They also demonstrate that the soul is immaterial, since the body cannot reflect upon itself, that is, it cannot superimpose itself on itself; therefore, when the soul turns upon itself, it is manifestly clear that it is incorporeal, immaterial, and spiritual and therefore incorruptible and immortal: for spiritual and immaterial things are immortal.

That the soul is spiritual is further strengthened by the fact that each power reflects upon the others, comprehending all their objects and operations. For the intellect understands memory, will, and the good, which is the object of the will, and all the operations of the will.

Similarly, the will loves the truth or the true, which is the object of the intellect, and can command and will all truths, the intellect itself, and all its operations. Likewise, memory stores all the knowledge of any things, even those of the intellect and will and their operations. Therefore, it is necessary that these powers are spiritual since no corporeal entities can so comprehensively embrace all things equally; nor are there any three corporeal measures found that can each contain all the others and as much as the total three can contain. Therefore, they are spiritual powers. Hence, the soul is immaterial and immortal.

Furthermore, the infinity of the capacities of both intellect and will confirms the immortality of the soul. For the intellect has an infinite capacity, as does the will; the will can love the good of one degree, two degrees, four, ten, a thousand degrees, and so on infinitely. Likewise, its desire is infinite, which nothing under the sun can fully satisfy; but after attaining any good, the will desires another. And the intellect can understand not only this whole universe but also two, three, etc., without limit; it can understand the perfection of one degree, two, three, ten, a thousand, and so on without end; and in the progression of numbers, it can add to any given number; similarly, in the progression of figures, it can add without limit. Therefore, it has an infinite capacity. Consequently, its duration will be perpetual; as is the property of a thing, so is its essence and existence. It cannot actually comprehend the infinite, but it does so progressively; thus, it is not actually infinite in essence but in duration.

Furthermore, the immortality of the soul is proven from its nature. For that which dies is that from which life is separated. But it is impossible for life to be separated from the soul, because it is formally and according to its nature life itself; hence, just as it is impossible for whiteness to be separated from itself, so as not to be white, so it is impossible for life to be separated from the soul.

But someone might say that while whiteness indeed cannot be separated from itself, it can nevertheless fail and be destroyed; and thus with the soul. I say that if whiteness is destroyed, it is only destroyed by some agent; similarly, if the soul is destroyed, it will be destroyed by some agent. However, every agent is either created or uncreated; and there is no doubt that an uncreated agent can destroy it, just as it could create it: for, like any other created thing, it depends immediately on God for its being, who influences and operates externally in a contingent and free manner; hence, if God ceased to operate, the soul would tend toward nothingness. But I say the soul is immortal because it cannot be destroyed by the causality of anything, relative to God. For all corruption arises from the dependence of the effect on some cause. Some effects depend on four causes: matter, form, efficient, and final, such as any corporeal substance, especially mixed ones; some depend on three only, such as any material form: they depend on matter, efficient, and final cause, but not on form, because the form is, and it cannot depend on itself; others depend on only two: efficient and final cause, such as intelligences, which are neither matter nor form, but pure acts. There is no effect that depends on only one cause; even if, according to philosophers, there is an intelligence that depends on God only as a final cause.

However, our soul necessarily depends on an efficient and final cause, like intelligences: hence, just as they are, so it is immortal. It does not depend on form, because it is form and act; nor does it have its whole being dependent on matter; for just as in operation it does not depend entirely on matter, but has some separate operations, as shown above: so neither does it depend on matter for its being. Therefore, when separated, it is not corrupted.

Moreover, if the rational soul and intellect totally depended on the body, so that with its failing, they would also fail and cease, then they would decline more and more as the body declined and

deteriorated. For example, the vegetative and sensitive powers, strength, form, beauty, and many other things that depend on matter, weaken and wither with old age and infirmity, and ultimately perish with the body. But certainly, the intellect flourishes in the elderly, who, even with a weakened and almost exhausted body, excel more and more in judgment, talent, knowledge, and prudence. Therefore, the intellect does not depend on matter, since it does not age or weaken. Otherwise, it would be an organic power like the other senses and powers, which are weakened and age by intense objects; for being organic, they are corrupted and harmed by excessively intense objects through the organic harmony being damaged. However, the intellect is not corrupted by an excellent object but is perfected by it.

Furthermore, if the soul were mortal and corruptible, it would either be corrupted in itself or accidentally, that is, by the body being corrupted, just as accidents are corrupted. But it cannot be corrupted accidentally; generation and corruption belong to a thing as does being: for being is acquired by generation and lost by corruption. What is in itself is generated and corrupted in itself. It is impossible for what is in itself to be corrupted accidentally by the corruption of another: for then it would not be in itself existing. But the soul exists in itself and can exist in itself; for what can operate in itself and does operate in itself can also exist in itself and exists; for operation belongs only to a being in act and demonstrates the nature of the thing. But our soul can operate in itself and does operate without a bodily organ, as shown above: therefore, it can exist in itself without the body. If, therefore, it is a being existing in itself, it cannot be corrupted accidentally by the corruption of the body; for accidental corruption does not belong to beings existing in themselves, but to accidents and those that depend on matter for their whole being.

Nor can it be corrupted in itself; for what is corrupted in itself is corrupted by a contrary and into a contrary: but the soul has no

contrary; for nothing is contrary to a substance: the soul itself is a substance. Nor is it a substance composed of contraries, or mixed from elements, or attached to contrary qualities, which mutually oppose and contradict each other, bringing about and contriving its destruction and dissolution; but it is a simple form and act. Since it is a simple form not dependent on matter but existing in itself, it will certainly be immortal and indestructible, just as intelligences are, because they are simple forms and acts not dependent on matter.

Finally, I omit that if the soul were mortal, many utterly insupportable inconveniences would follow. For the reason for true beatitude, which cannot exist in this present life, would entirely perish if there were no other life. Many virtues would also perish, since they do not receive their reward in this life, such as temperance, sobriety, virginity, penance, poverty, religion, etc.; for these virtues deprive and strip one of the greatest pleasures of this life. If in another life there were no reward for them, they would utterly perish, since they have either no utility or pleasure or very little: but much evil and affliction.

Moreover, the most equitable justice of God would not exist, since in this life many virtues and their acts and works are not rewarded; indeed, holy and praiseworthy men, who are continuously engaged in acts of virtue, restraining pleasure and not fulfilling the desires of the flesh, but chastising their bodies and bringing them into subjection, could truly say what the Apostle said: "If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." What reward did Abel receive in this life for his righteousness and truth? What reward did the thousands of martyrs receive who fought for justice and truth to the point of blood and death? What benefit did those who died for preserving and defending acts of virtue, for holy laws, for their people, country, and republic achieve?

Thus, if the soul were mortal, the very foundation of true happiness and many virtues would collapse, leading to insupportable absurdities. The existence of an immortal soul and an afterlife is essential to maintain the coherence of justice, virtue, and the ultimate fulfillment of human aspirations.

Finally, if there were no life beyond this one, we could rightly accuse God of injustice and, like Jeremiah, say to Him: "You are righteous, O Lord, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal very treacherously?" On the contrary, the righteous are killed all day long, they are considered as sheep for the slaughter. Behold that great rich man, who was very wealthy, clothed in purple and fine linen and feasting sumptuously every day; he was acting wickedly. But the most righteous Lazarus was extremely poor and a miserable beggar, lying at the rich man's gate, full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and no one gave him anything. Where then is the reward of virtue and the punishment of sin? Where is the equity of justice, which leaves no evil unpunished and no good unrewarded? The soul certainly lives after death and thus the rich man died and was buried in hell, where he remains in perpetual torment for the gravity of his sins; but the righteous Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, where he is now consoled for his virtues' reward. Thus indeed Abel was killed by his wicked brother; having died for his righteousness, he still speaks and cries out to God to avenge his blood from the hand of his wicked brother. Moved by his voice, God inflicts miserable punishments on Cain for his crime, saying:

Cursed are you from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

אָרור אַתָּה מִן־הָאָדָמָה (Arur atah min ha'adamah): Cursed are you from the earth, or before the earth, or more than the earth, or above the earth.

For the preposition מִן (min) in Hebrew sometimes means "from," or "by," or "of," and sometimes it is a word by which the Hebrews express a comparison and it means "more," "greater," or "before."

Rabbi Solomon explains this phrase in the second meaning: יוֹתֵר (yoter) that is, more, so that the sense is: cursed are you more than the earth, which was cursed for Adam's sin when it is said: Cursed is the earth because of your work, or for your sake. But Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra and Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, as Rabbi Abrabanel relates, explained it differently: that is, he cursed him so that he would always suffer scarcity, poverty, and want from the earth which he would choose to cultivate; for it would not give him its yield and fruits of itself, as was fitting; and also that if he cultivated it for sowing, he would not prosper, nor would it continue to give its strength, that is, its fruits, as it had given before until the time of this curse. Then it says: Which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand: to show that he shed his blood and hid it in the earth.

But we explain it in this way, that the most just God inflicted punishments on Cain for the crime he committed. There are three punishments given. The first is: You will be cursed above the earth; the second: When you till it, it will not yield its fruits to you; the third: You will be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth.

First: God curses Cain saying: "Cursed are you above the earth." He says, "You have committed a great crime, you have carried out a horrendous act, you have inflicted a cruel death on a man with your own hand: a death so terrible, so dreadful to mankind. Now, therefore, because of the horror of your crime, men will surely curse you: you will be hateful, detestable, and accursed to all; and if the

earth was cursed for the sin of your father, with its uncultivated and horrible appearance, barren and unfruitful, covered with thorns and thistles, made accursed and detestable to men: you will be cursed more than the earth, more detestable and execrable to men.

For although the earth, being laborious and afflicting men with many toils and pains, when cultivated and worked, produces rich and sweet fruits and bread, the most desirable thing for man. You, however, will always be hateful to men, always evil, filling the world only with bad offspring, never with good, never with pleasant ones: from you will flow all iniquity, all deceit, all guile, oppression, violence, rapine, theft, avarice, lust, disorderly love of earthly things, depraved, detestable, and pestilential morals. Hence, you will be more cursed, more detestable, and execrable above the earth, because these your offspring, more hateful than thorns and thistles, are detestable and execrable.

Therefore, you will be cursed above the earth. Cursed, I say, more than the earth, because although the earth by its own nature produces thorns and thistles, when cultivated, it produces good, sweet, and pleasant fruits: from you, however, only evil will come forth. For beyond the fact that you will always perform only evil, unjust, and iniquitous deeds, from you also will be born children who imitate the works of their fathers, men who love themselves, covetous, proud, haughty, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, fierce, without kindness, traitors, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.

Therefore, cursed are you above the earth and more than the earth. You, I say, are cursed, not the earth because of you, but I curse you yourself, and you yourself, that is, your heart I harden, so that just as

you deprived yourself of my grace and made yourself completely unworthy of ever receiving it again, indeed you rejected the grace offered to you with the utmost kindness and resisted it with a hard and uncircumcised heart, and rather hurled yourself into the precipice of great and enormous crime and irreparable ruin: I also, most justly, in punishment for your crime and cruel sin, will let you fall irreparably into every other evil.

This is the first most miserable punishment inflicted on Cain by God to be endured.

Verse 12: The second: And when you till the ground, it shall not yield to you its fruits. For the sin of the first man, God cursed the ground, saying: "Cursed is the ground because of you; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread." God did not curse man, but the ground because of man. For God intended to lead Adam out of his sin with the gift of His grace, so that he might be placed among the elect, who would receive eternal blessing from God, and be seated at the right hand with the lambs, to be given eternal blessing together with all the elect. But He cursed the ground, so that through the labors and sweat of the earth, man might expiate his sin and merit to receive pardon through the affliction of penance.

In the punishment of Cain, however, both the ground and he himself are cursed, and he is cursed before the ground. Cain is indeed cursed, for he was already counted among the reprobate and damned, never to be given eternal blessedness, but to be tormented with eternal punishments because of his crimes and wicked deeds. Then the ground of Cain is also cursed, indeed much more severely cursed. For it is said: "In labor... you shall eat from it all the days of your life"; but to Cain: "When you till the ground, it shall not yield to you its fruits": the ground was indeed cursed for him; it would

produce nothing but thorns and thistles, burs, thistles, and useless herbs and nothing suitable for human nourishment; yet when cultivated it would have given its fruits and yielded its strength. But to you, it is said, it is so cursed that not even by many, continuous, and the greatest labors cultivated, worked, and with all diligence and industry elaborated, will it yield its strength: its fruits, I say, to you will be granted only very sparingly and meagerly: so that you will suffer continuous poverty, want, and lack of necessary sustenance, and be wasted almost continually by the greatest famine. For I will make the heavens above your land as bronze, so that neither dew nor rain will fall upon it, and it will become very barren, sterile, and unproductive for you, because you have polluted and defiled it with human blood; for it has opened its mouth and received your brother's blood from your hand.

The Hebrews say that Cain hid his slain brother in a pit in the dust of the earth, just as Moses hid the slain Egyptian in the sand; for Cain foolishly thought that his murdered brother could be hidden from both his father and God, intending not to wash away the grievous guilt of fratricide with repentance and humble confession, but to make it graver by the falsehood of the vilest lie, impudently and brazenly denying that he had done anything to him or knew where he was. "Now," he said, "before I killed my brother, I looked around here and there and saw no one present; my father is far away: I do not see God present; therefore, I will hide the slain corpse, I will conceal the blood in the earth. When my brother no longer appears, if anyone asks me where he is, I will answer that I do not know: Am I my brother's keeper? Thus, this crime of mine will be hidden from everyone; for no one will be able to prove that I did anything to my brother or that I killed him; no one saw me, no one will be able to accuse me to my father: the matter is safe."

But he was certainly thinking foolishly. God, even if He might have been hidden from men, could not be hidden from: "The voice," He

says, "of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." "It is known to me," He says, "open to my eyes and utterly clear that you killed your brother. I saw your impiety, your heinous crime, and cruel deed; and even if no man saw you, I was present: it could not be hidden from me. I know that you hid your slain brother in the earth; therefore, you are cursed because of your wickedness and iniquity: and the earth is also cursed because of you, which opened its mouth and received your brother's blood from your hand. When you till it, it will not yield to you its fruits, and you will toil in poverty, want, need, and hunger."

This was the second punishment inflicted on Cain.

Third: You will be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. A particular punishment for murderers is to be forced to emigrate from their own places and ancestral homes and to be exiled from their native land. God inflicted this punishment on Cain in the third place; hence, he was compelled to leave his native seat and cultivated possessions, from which he expected rich fruits, and to set out into exile: For he went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt as a fugitive in the land to the east of Eden.

Then, indeed, since he was cursed by God, he was hateful and execrable to all, he could find no rest anywhere, he was secure nowhere, he sought solitary places and areas not much cultivated by men, always fearing and trembling lest anyone who found him would kill him. For the sight of any man struck him with the fear of death and violence because of the murder his wicked hand first brought upon a man. Miserable calamity! He always wandered from place to place, seeking a secure habitation unknown and inaccessible to men, lest, if men knew where his firm and continuous dwelling was, they might attack him, as someone supremely hateful and execrable to all, to kill him due to the horror of his crime.

But surely his continual wandering and never firm but always unstable dwelling could also result from what was inflicted upon him as a punishment previously: When you till the ground, it shall not yield to you its fruits. Cain, indeed, wandered here and there, searching for fertile and sufficiently good lands that would yield him rich fruits, so that he would not perish in starvation and exhaustion, and to satisfy the insatiable appetite and greed of his voracious avarice, which is never satisfied. Hence, departing from the presence of the Lord, he went to dwell in the land to the east of Eden, near the place where the terrestrial paradise was planted by God's hand and cultivated with divine care. For that land was very fertile and quite good; but the better it was by nature, the more desolate, barren, and sterile it was for Cain, who was pursued everywhere by the divine sentence, and it yielded him only unpleasant, wild, withered, and almost burnt fruits, and very meager ones at that. Hence, in that land as well, the wretched man, oppressed by miserable calamities, lived a wandering and unsettled life.

But let us hear what Cain responds to the Lord after receiving these punishments.

Verses 13 – 14: And Cain said to the Lord, "My iniquity is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from your face, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth; and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

Hebrew text: And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is too great to endure. Behold, you have driven me today from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from your face, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth; and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

Chaldean interpreter: "My iniquity is too great to be forgiven. Behold, you drive me from here, and I will not be able to hide from your presence, etc."

Jerusalem Targum: And Cain said before the Lord, "My iniquities are too many to bear. Nevertheless, it is possible for your presence to forsake and forgive me."

Greek Vulgate Edition: "My sin is greater than can be forgiven; if you drive me today from the face of the earth, and I am hidden from your face, I shall be groaning and trembling on the earth."

In the Hebrew text, there are two ambiguous words that have caused great diversity among interpreters. They are עֲוֹנִי (avoni) and נִשָּׂא (nasa); the first word עֲוֹן (avon) means iniquity, that is, guilt, and also the punishment and affliction for the guilt; just as with us, it signifies sin and guilt, and also the liability to punishment and the sacrifice and affliction for sin, as we read in the Apostle: "Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." He made him sin, that is, a sacrifice for sin, as a penalty for sin. So indeed, that word very frequently means guilt; very often, however, it means the punishment for guilt and punishment itself. Similarly, the second word frequently means to forgive and remit; very often, however, it means to bear, endure, and lift.

According to this ambiguity of the words, this passage is explained in various ways, especially by the Hebrews. Rabbi Solomon, from the words of ancient traditions, explains according to the former meanings of the words: "Great is my iniquity, that is, my sin, so much that it cannot be borne to be remitted or forgiven"; and according to this explanation, his "מִנִּשָּׂא" (min-nasa) is superfluous. He reads this passage with astonishment: "Is my iniquity greater than it can be borne? You sustain the upper and lower worlds, and you cannot bear my sin?" that is, forgive and be propitiated.

Rabbi Abraham [Aben Ezra], however, has a different opinion. Although "the opinion of almost all interpreters is that Cain confesses his sin and that נשא means סל וק, that is, to spare," he interprets these words in another sense, "so that iniquity is understood to be placed for punishment and the reward of evil, which comes because of iniquity and sin; as we read in Genesis: Because the iniquity, that is, the punishment of the Amorites, is not yet complete; and in 1 Samuel: If iniquity happens to you, that is, punishment": these are the words of Saul to the woman with a familiar spirit. He says, therefore, that this is the meaning of these words: "My iniquity, that is, my punishment, is greater than I can bear and endure." Certainly, what follows seems more consistent with this interpretation from the context of the speech. Behold, he says, you are driving me today from the face of the earth, etc.

However, Rabbi Abrabanel subscribes more to the former interpretation and, along with Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, explains it thus, that Cain indeed confesses and truly laments over his great sin, which he committed: "Great," he says, "and grand is my iniquity, which I did in killing my brother Abel, more than I can bear, that is, to be forgiven me: for you are just, Lord, and your judgment is right." And so Rabbi Abrabanel explains the whole letter: "Behold you are driving me... from the face of the earth, that is, I am worthy of the death penalty, let alone that the earth should yield me very little produce: and I shall be hidden from your face, that is, you shall not provide for me with special providence: or I shall not be able to stand in your presence to pray and to offer sacrifice and gift, because I shall be ashamed and embarrassed, because I have taken away the time of my youth. And I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive. This is the third punishment inflicted on him, and he means to say that his iniquity is a greater punishment than even this. And finally, in the manner of a prayer, he says: Now, therefore, everyone who finds me will kill me, that is, let it be your

will that whoever finds me will kill me, and this will be mercy and expiation for my iniquity, because without this I am not duly punished."

This is the exposition of these things. However, the common opinion of our people is that Cain, having given himself over from bad to worse, added sin to sin: he killed his brother: now he despairs of the mercy of the most merciful God: "Greater," he says, "is my iniquity than to be forgiven, that is, than that God can forgive me with His mercy."

We, therefore, explain this passage in this way. Certainly, Cain could have, as he should have, recognized the weight of his most grievous guilt from the severity and calamity of the punishments that the most just God had brought upon him for his sin, and he would have plainly seen that he was being punished less than what was just and deserved. For if he had weighed the calamity and punishment he was suffering against the guilt, by whose merit they were inflicted upon him, in the scales of right reason, without any doubt these punishments would have appeared to him to be as numerous as the sand of the sea. But the miserable man, contrary to this, which is typical of the wicked who avert their eyes from God, justice, and piety, acted entirely otherwise; for he fixed his eyes on the severity of the punishments, with no consideration of the much heavier weight of his guilt. Hence, he boldly and most impudently accuses God of injustice and excessive cruelty, for pressing him with the severity of punishments beyond what was decent, just, and deserved, and for bringing upon him more afflictions and punishments than he could bear.

Certainly, according to the Hebrew context, this seems to be the genuine sense of the letter; and then he begins to entreat the severity of the punishment: "Behold, you are driving me... from the face of the earth": behold, he says, you punish me with harsh exile; you

order me to leave my native and well-known, well-cultivated land; to change the dwellings of my paternal soil; to wander and be exiled through foreign regions. What inconveniences will not follow me? Poverty and extreme lack, ignominy, and contempt. And you not only shut me out from my native land, or certainly relegate me to some island or certain and secure place: but you condemn me to a wide flight, continuous wandering, perpetual pilgrimage, and deprivation of firm and stable dwelling places. Nor is this exile temporary, but eternal, until I am deprived of common light. Then you commanded the earth not to bring forth its fruits for me, even if cultivated and labored upon extensively, so that I may languish and be consumed by extreme want, penury, and utter poverty until I perish. Moreover, I shall be hidden from your face, that is, I shall never be able to appear in your presence, to be considered worthy of your grace and to pray to you for my salvation and to offer you oblation and gift. Thus Rabbi Moses ben Nachman explains. Others among the Hebrews, however, say: You will not provide for me with special providence.

Finally, note that this passage can have another interpretation. To cast someone from the surface of the earth is to deliver him to death, according to the Hebrew phraseology: Behold, he says, you deliver me to death and because of you I shall be hidden. For the Hebrew word, which we translated as "from your face," also means "because of you"; and thus the sense will be: Behold, you deliver me to death and because of you, that is, your severe judgment, I shall be hidden from the face of the earth, that is, I shall be handed over to the soil, buried: for this is what happens to the bodies of the dead, just as he himself had hidden his slain brother in a pit. Furthermore, he says, you make me an exile even from your face, stripped and deprived of your grace, you will always turn away from me, curse me, detest me, so that I may never deserve your grace or favor, just as there are those stripped of the grace of some great king, whom the king

always turns away from and banishes far from himself, so that they may never see his face; but orders them to be exiled far from his face through foreign lands, always condemned by the sentence of death. For you have cursed me and commanded that I be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth; and not only that: but marked by such a crime and wickedness, you have made me an exile, odious, detestable, and execrable to all. Now therefore, everyone who finds me will kill me.

I bring this interpretation forward not as one who disregards the very true expositions of others, especially those of our most serious interpreters; for it is so far from my intention to despise them that I hold them worthy of the highest praise and honor. And certainly, if the text of our Edition, which I always revere, is understood as it stands, it will undoubtedly be evident that Cain plunged himself into the deepest abyss of despair. Unless, perhaps, it is interpreted interrogatively, as many read, so: Is my iniquity so great that I do not deserve forgiveness? And thus this sense can agree with the one we brought, as if to say: Is my guilt so great that I cannot deserve forgiveness, because you pursue me with such punishments? As if I were to say: Certainly you do not unjustly and beyond what is deserved afflict me because of the perpetrated guilt: you see that you also make me marked by your crime, so that everyone who finds me will not fear to lay hands on me and will not hesitate to kill me, as your enemy, whom you turn away from; indeed, they will think they are doing a thing pleasing to you, because if they kill me, they will kill your enemy.

Verse 15: And the Lord said to him: Not so; but whosoever kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that anyone who found him should not kill him.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord said to him: Therefore, whosoever kills Cain shall be avenged sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that anyone who found him should not strike him.

Chaldean Interpreter: Therefore, whosoever kills Cain shall be avenged by me in the seventh generation. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, so that anyone who found him should not kill him.

The Greek Text reads: Not so, whosoever kills Cain shall pay sevenfold vengeance. And the Lord God set a mark upon Cain, etc.

The Hebrew word לכן means "therefore," "because of this," or "on account of this"; however, the Septuagint, which our Interpreter followed, translated it as οὐχ οὕτως, meaning "not so," as if it were לא כן, that is, "not so," "by no means so."

This passage is interpreted differently by both our commentators and the Hebrew doctors. Many think that this passage should be read with an ellipsis, so it would be: "Whosoever kills Cain"; and here would be the end of the sentence; it should be understood that his punishment will be so and so; however, Scripture does not specify the punishment.

Thus Rabbi Solomon interprets this passage, saying that it is an abbreviated scripture: "I do not want," says God, "to avenge Cain, except at the end of seven generations"; hence by שבעתים, he understands seven generations; for they think that Lamech, who was the seventh from Cain, killed Cain himself, because of the words Lamech said to his wives. A similar way of speaking with ellipsis is found in 2 Samuel: "Whosoever strikes the Jebusite, etc."; Scripture does not specify there what he would do to him; but in Chronicles, it expresses that he would make him a leader and a chief.

Rabbi Abraham [Aben Ezra] similarly explains: "Until the seventh generation he shall be avenged; that is, retribution shall be taken upon him; for the Lord prolonged his wrath against Cain until the

seventh generation." He also says it is correct that by the name Cain, his offspring is understood, just as Israel is; and Scripture traces the genealogy of Cain up to the seventh generation, which afterward perished in the flood.

The Targum seems wonderfully to favor this exposition since it has that in the seventh generation Cain shall be avenged.

But Rabbi Abrabanel, because he previously explained that Cain expected and desired death when he said: "Everyone who finds me will kill me," meaning, "Who will grant me that whoever finds me will kill me?" interprets this passage as follows: "He who kills Cain shall be avenged sevenfold; since Cain desires his soul to die, I therefore decree that he will not die now, but will live to bear his punishment; and because of this, he who kills him calls out and acts against the divine intention, Cain's blood will be avenged sevenfold. And therefore, He set a mark upon him, that anyone who found him should not kill him. This mark is his fear and dread over all living things, so they would not touch or harm him." In Bereshit Rabba, the Hebrews have that this mark was the dog, which guarded Abel's sheep, which God gave to guard Cain's body.

However, our interpretations are the same; this mark is considered by our people to be a trembling of the limbs.

We, therefore, explain this passage as follows: And God said to him: Not so; but whosoever kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold. In Hebrew, it is: Therefore, or rather, he who kills Cain; but the sense is the same. For Cain said: Now therefore, everyone who finds me will kill me. But God responded: Because you think this and fear it, I tell you that it will not be so; rather, because you fear this, I tell you and decree that everyone who kills Cain will be punished sevenfold.

It is common for Sacred Scripture to use a specific number to denote an indefinite number, such as: "Seven times a day the righteous falls," meaning many times; and: "Seven times a day I praised you," meaning many times; and it is very frequent in Sacred Scripture to use a specified number to denote an indefinite and infinite number. We read clearly in 1 Samuel that Hannah sang: "Until the barren has borne many"; in Hebrew it is שבעה, seven, although, according to Sacred History, she bore only three sons and two daughters; but the number seven is used for an indeterminate plurality. Similarly, it is said: "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he walks through dry and arid places seeking rest, etc. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself," meaning several spirits; and the woman from whom He cast out seven demons, meaning many.

Therefore, the number seven is often used to represent an indefinite number, and it is a very common practice in Scripture to use a specific number to indicate an indefinite one. Thus, I think this passage should be understood: "Whosoever kills Cain shall be avenged sevenfold," meaning he shall pay many and multiple penalties, and I will exact it from him. Hence, it should not be considered as ellipsis or aposiopesis, but as its proper expression.

For a clearer explanation of this passage, it must be noted that, although Cain, according to the law of retaliation—by which an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a wound for a wound, a life for a life must be paid—had most justly deserved the death penalty; for whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has man been made;—and he himself first committed this crime and cruel act against his brother, a just and innocent man, having a soul pleasing to God; yet this punishment, though most deserved, should only be inflicted on him by God or by a judge appointed by God; for He says: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Therefore, whoever else had inflicted this

punishment on Cain by his own hand would not have done so justly, but wrongly and would have gravely sinned; hence deservedly he would have paid severe penalties for the grave crime and God would have exacted it from him.

However, this should not be understood in such a way that whoever kills Cain would be punished sevenfold more than Cain; for this cannot be in accordance with reason, since punishments should correspond to the guilt, and it is much graver to kill a just and holy man than a wicked and impious one, who can rightfully be subjected to the death penalty; but rather that, although Cain by the merit of his crime deserved many and very severe penalties, he should receive them from God or the appointed judge. Whoever, therefore, without receiving the judicial power from God, inflicted these otherwise deserved penalties on Cain, would also have made himself guilty of many penalties. Therefore He says: "Not so; it is not my will or sentence that you should be killed by anyone, as you think and fear; for although this punishment would be most deserved and justly inflicted upon you: know that you are being punished less than you deserve for your crime: and so it is not my will or judgment that you should be killed by anyone, but whoever lays violent hands on you will act against my will and sentence and will incur my wrath, which it is dreadful to fall into, so that I will exact and seek many penalties and retributions from him. Therefore, whoever attempts to kill you will make himself liable to a sevenfold, that is, multiple punishment. Therefore, I set a mark on you, so that everyone may know that it is not my will or judgment that you should be killed by anyone, and that no one, unknowingly, by killing you, may make himself liable to such great penalties. Therefore, do not think it is my will that you should be killed by anyone who finds you; take this mark as a sign of my will.

However, what this sign was, Scripture does not reveal; but it is commonly accepted that it was some kind of terrible and dreadful

trembling of the limbs, so that he always carried about his disjointed and weak limbs, groaning and trembling, always fearful and quaking, by which he exhibited himself as a miserable and dreadful spectacle, continuously paying the penalties for the crime he had committed. By this act, he showed how detestable and execrable homicide is, and with that groaning and trembling, he was like a herald of God, proclaiming that no one should ever dare to commit such deeds as he had done, lest they fall into the same punishment and severe penalty after committing the crime.

Verse 16: And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt as a fugitive in the land to the east of Eden.

Hebrew Text: And Cain went out from before the Lord, or from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Chaldean Interpreter: And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in a land of wandering and instability, which was worked upon by him, to the east of the Garden of Eden.

Similarly, the Jerusalem Targum translates; however, it adds in a paraphrastic manner that before Cain killed his brother Abel, the land produced fruits for him as if they were the fruits of the Garden of Eden; but after he sinned and killed his brother Abel, it produced thorns and thistles for him to gather.

The Greek Text has: And Cain went out from the face of God and dwelt in the land of Naid opposite Eden.

This passage requires a somewhat longer discourse from us to be clearly elucidated. For if God is everywhere, how did Cain go out from His presence? And if God is spirit, how is He said to have a face from which Cain departed? And finally, if Eden is that most delightful place of the paradise of delights, from which Adam was

expelled by God for his sin, how did the most wicked Cain dwell in that place after committing so many crimes?

Indeed, it must be established and firmly held that God is everywhere, fills every place, and is present everywhere, no matter what some wicked men, not understanding the Holy Scriptures and not wisely thinking about what is to be believed about God, dare to deny, being blinded by the darkness of ignorance and impiety. That God is everywhere is proven by the firm authority of the Holy Scriptures. For David says: "If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I descend to hell, you are there; if I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me." The Lord also says through Jeremiah: "I fill heaven and earth"; and through Isaiah: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." Solomon says the same in Chronicles: "For our God is great above all gods. If heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how much less can I build a house for Him?" We read the same in Blessed Job: "He is higher than heaven, and what will you do? He is deeper than hell, and how will you know? His measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea."

This same truth is firmly supported by the authority of all rightly wise men. First, it is the firm opinion of all Church Doctors, as well as the entire Church, and of all theologians. Moreover, the greatest of the pagan philosophers also asserted this. For instance, it is very widely stated that this was the opinion of Hermes Trismegistus, since his Pimander is chiefly filled with the idea that the world is a vessel full of God and that the spirit of God contains everything. Empedocles said that God fills everything, as is reported of him in the book "De Mundo," which is rightly attributed to Aristotle, where the same idea is also extensively discussed. Iamblichus, in "De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum," specifically and very thoroughly proves

that God is everywhere. Hence Virgil's statement: "All things are full of Jove."

Themistius, in his Paraphrase "De Loco Dei," says that God clothes all things, not as a garment that only touches externally, but internally, so that the whole touches the whole. Alexander of Aphrodisias, in "De Anima" Book 2, states that God is everywhere; the same is attributed to him by Philoponus in "De Anima" Book 1, where he says that Alexander and his followers claim that God is everywhere. Simplicius, in his clear digression "De Loco Dei," also concludes, following Alexander's opinion: "Since God is indivisible and separate, as being perfect in Himself, from the material body, it is rightly said that He is everywhere and nowhere." However, since Aristotle seemed to say that God is in the first heaven, he means this in a certain eminent way: because the first mobile sphere is what first participates in the motion of the maker. He also says, according to the opinions of Aristotle and Plato, that God contains all things by the bond of His will, which is a firmer bond than the nature of those things. Finally, Philoponus, in "Meteorology" Book 1, shortly after the beginning, brings up a reason from Plotinus as to why the heavens are moved in a circular motion, saying that "the heavens wish to imitate God; because, since the mind and divine intellect, the creator and architect of all things, has no place assigned to its substance: but in all parts of the world the power of His light and His supreme power and eternal action are found and dominate; thus the heavens, which, being a body, cannot be everywhere at once, strive according to their parts to be in all places."

Finally, this truth does not lack the most probable reasons by which it is supported. It is indeed firmly believed and sanctioned by common understanding that God is a substance, not corporeal, but incorporeal, immaterial, spiritual, the simplest and purest act, unmingled and entirely indivisible, whose life is the best and eternal. It is necessary that the substance which is God is infinite. First, it is

infinite in duration, which we call eternity, so that it never began and will never cease to be. For He is the first cause, on whom heaven and all nature depend, before whom nothing exists. If He had not been from eternity, certainly nothing would have been from eternity; therefore, nothing would have existed afterward either; for nothing can make nothing, nor can the same make itself; and whether the world is considered to have been produced from eternity or not, it is necessary that God Himself is eternal, since He is the first mover and the first cause, the cause of causes. Hence, if motion has existed from eternity, surely the mover from which motion comes has also existed; but if motion began, as it truly began in time, it would not have begun unless a cause had preexisted before time and motion. Therefore, it is necessary that He existed from eternity before all time and motion. Therefore, the divine substance is infinite in duration, that is, in eternity.

Secondly, the divine substance must be of infinite strength and vigor, so that it has the infinite and immense power and potency to operate. Note that, although God has infinite power, He moves and operates in time and not in an instant, or not without time—although He could do so—because His power is free from matter; for an infinite power, if it were in matter or a body, would operate without time, because it would act according to its entire capacity and necessarily. But God has immaterial power and is a free agent, operating through knowledge and will as much as He wills and not according to the ultimate extent of His power, but by choice as He sees fit for the movable.

This is demonstrated and made clear by the fact that He can move the immense machine of the world and the mass of the heavens for an eternal duration. For if He can move them for infinite time, He certainly has infinite power. Indeed, if something that has the power of moving from itself can move for a certain period, such as a day, then if it can move for two days, it will have twice as much power;

and as the time increases, the power must necessarily be greater. Therefore, if God can move for infinite time, He will have infinite power.

But you might say: the same consequence will apply to intelligences, which move for infinite time. Certainly, this would be the case if the intelligences themselves existed from themselves and had power from themselves. But surely, whatever they have is from God, and it is not from their own power but from the power of God that they move for infinite time, from whom they have both existence and all power. However, God is not from another, nor does He have power from another, but He exists through Himself and has all power from Himself.

Moreover, by the very fact that intelligences are from God and depend on Him, the infinite vigor of divine power is evidently shown. For if they depend on God and are produced by Him, they are made from nothing, as they consist of no matter. To produce something from nothing is an act of infinite power; because if an agent that produces from a disposed subject is of some power, then what produces from an indisposed subject is of greater power, and the more indisposed the subject is, the greater is the power of the agent. Therefore, what produces from a subject that is in no way disposed and from what is in no way existent, will surely be of infinite power, and the more excellent and noble the product is, the greater the power.

The same judgment applies to the creation of the universe, whether by emanation or by creation; however, it is said to be produced, whether from eternity or in time, it will argue for infinite power, because it could only be produced from nothing.

Thirdly, it is necessary to say that the divine substance is, so to speak, infinite in being, namely that in itself and in its existence it has unlimited perfection and comprehends the perfection of all

being. For if the essence of God were not infinite, which is the root of infinite power and vigor and eternity, God could not be eternal or of infinite strength and vigor. It is impossible for infinite power to reside in a finite and limited substance; for power accompanies substance and is from substance.

Furthermore, if the divine being were limited or confined in any way, surely this limitation would be from some agent or recipient. For any thing enclosed by limits is enclosed by its producer, from whom it has its being, or by its recipient, in which it is received and to which it adheres; for everything that is received and adheres must be received according to the manner of the recipient. But God has neither a producer from whom He exists, since He is the first cause, nor is He received in or adheres to anything, since He cannot be, being entirely immaterial, as the purest act. Therefore, God is infinite and immense, just as He is eternal. If He is infinite and immense, then He is everywhere, that is, He coexists in every place; otherwise, if He is in some places and not everywhere, He will be locally limited and determined. All limitation is a sign of finiteness and imperfection in substance, just as coexisting with some time but not all time implies a limited and circumscribed duration. But if God, in His eternity, coexists with all time, then in His immensity, He also coexists with all places.

But someone might say: therefore God will be in infinite places and infinite places will be found. I say that there would be no inconsistency if it were possible for God to fill them all; indeed, He would fill the infinity of places. But because nature, apart from God, cannot bear the infinite capacity of a place, therefore, infinite places are neither given nor can be given, which would need to be given to contain the immensity of God. For God, whose nature is of the highest and entirely unfailing perfection, is in no way in need of a place in which He might be received. For God is supremely perfect in Himself, needing nothing outside of Himself, relying on Himself

and sufficient to Himself, remaining in eternal stability in Himself. For before the constitution of the world, when as yet there was no place or time, God was eternal and immense, just as He is now, not coexisting with any time or place. But given time and place, just as it cannot be that, being eternal, He does not coexist with any time, so it is impossible that there should be any place that He, being immense and infinite, does not fill. However, just as He exists at all times, He is not measured by time; thus, existing in all places, He is not circumscribed or defined by any place, but remains always immense. Hence, He is said not to be enclosed by the world, because the heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain Him; not that He is actually present outside the world, but because, just as His power is called infinite, not limited in the creation of the universe, since He could create many other almost infinite worlds, so neither is His immensity limited; but as many worlds as His infinite power can create, so many can His immensity fill.

Therefore, by His power, He is not contained within the whole world, because He can fill many more; just as the rational soul indeed fills the whole body of an infant, coexisting with each part of the body as its form and act, yet is not outside its body: nevertheless, it cannot be said to be contained by its power to the utmost. For it can certainly fill a larger body and the same infant's body, when he becomes a perfect man, growing in itself neither increasing in the larger nor diminishing in the smaller, but always equal; so also God in the world. And just as the soul, because it is immaterial, does not entirely depend on the body, but is spiritual, incorporeal, and indivisible, is indeed whole in the whole body and whole in each and every part and member, however small; so also God is wholly present in all things and wholly present in each individual: wholly indeed in all things, because He is immense; and wholly in each individual, because, being spiritual and purest spirit and act, He is

indivisible and entirely indivisible; nor is He hindered, being whole here, from being whole elsewhere and whole in any place.

For we perceive something similar in time. For that span of time in which the heaven is carried around in a single motion from east to west, that is, twenty-four hours, which comprise the natural day with both night and daytime included, is certainly common to all. For the whole span of the natural day, during which the revolution is completed, is possessed by the easterners and the westerners, and the southerners and the northerners, and those who inhabit the Arctic and the Antarctic, and those who are in Rome, Venice, or Paris: and all have the entire twenty-four hours; nor do those who have the whole complete span of time hinder others from also having the whole span; but this whole time is whole for all and each individually, not, however, entirely so. Thus, God is wholly present indeed to all things and wholly present to each individually, but He is not entirely whole in each individual. For if He were entirely whole here, He could certainly not be anywhere except here: but He is wholly present everywhere potentially, presentially, and essentially. Just as the soul is wholly present in all and each part of the body potentially, presentially, and essentially: potentially, indeed, since it operates in the whole body and each part of the body is subject to its power, ability, and strength; presentially, since it touches each part of the body wholly, is distant from none, but all parts are present to it; essentially, finally, since by its substance it is the soul in the body and its parts according to essence, informs, activates, and gives being; so God is potentially in every place, because He operates everywhere and all things are subject to His power; presentially, He is everywhere, because He touches all things and in a certain way intimately clothes them, is distant from none, and all things are present to Him; indeed, all things, however hidden, are naked and open to His eyes, nor is any creature invisible in His sight; thirdly, essentially, since by His substance and essence He fills

every place and is more intimate to every thing than the thing is to itself: He gives being to each thing and preserves each in being; for every creature is vanity in itself and it is necessary that it continually and unceasingly rely on divine power; otherwise, if the divine hand, which upholds and sustains all things by the word of His power, were withdrawn, all would return to nothing and completely fail.

But indeed, although God is everywhere and, as we have said, fills every place, yet in some places He is said to be more especially present, not because He is more there, but because He manifests His power more excellently there and performs more noble works. And not to digress from a similar proposition—for the soul of man is in the image and likeness of God—in this, though it is whole in the whole and whole in any part of the whole, yet it is said to be more in the brain, or the head, and the heart, because there the operations of its power and ability shine forth more. Thus, God is said to be more in heaven than on earth, because there His power, wisdom, and goodness shine forth most and He operates more excellently there than on earth. Similarly, I say of other places, for example, sacred places, then in the just, the angels, and the blessed, by grace here and glory in heaven, and by union in Christ. Thus, God was said to be more in that temple of the Jews, in the ark, and on the mercy seat. Thus, when God appeared to Jacob the patriarch while he was sleeping, he awoke and said: "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it;" and in fear he said: "How awesome is this place: this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

With these things thus seen, it is clear that, since God is everywhere, when Scripture says that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, it should not be understood that he fled from God and went to a place where God was not; but he left that place where God had appeared to him and rebuked him and corrected him for his sin. For just as Jacob said: "Surely the Lord is in this place," because He had appeared to him there and not elsewhere; so also Cain went out from

the presence of the Lord, that is, from the place where the Lord had appeared to him, who had not appeared to him elsewhere.

But how did he go out from the presence of the Lord if, since God is spirit, He does not have a face? For a spirit does not have flesh and bones. This is a figurative expression. Therefore, attention must sometimes be paid in Sacred Scripture to God being said to have been seen or to have spoken to someone, just as we read very often that God appeared to the patriarchs and was seen by Moses and when we read in Exodus that Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel; and when we read that the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend; similarly, when He was seen by Jacob leaning on the ladder and spoke to him. Certainly, the Lord neither spoke nor was seen. For no one has ever seen God, nor can anyone see Him; thus He said to Moses: "You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live:" but angels appeared and spoke in the person of God.

Hence, in Genesis, we read that the Lord appeared to Abraham in the valley of Mamre, and it is immediately added that there were three angels. And more manifestly, when we read in Exodus that the Lord first appeared to Moses in the flame of a bush and said: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," the Hebrew truth there has that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses and spoke thus. Just as the protomartyr Stephen in his speech to the council said, as it is reported in the Acts of the Apostles: "When forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the desert of Mount Sinai in the flame of a burning bush;" hence, he said the same to the Jews: "You who received the law as delivered by angels."

Therefore, whenever we read in the Old Testament that God spoke to someone or appeared to someone, we understand an angel speaking and appearing in the person of God. But because angels, being incorporeal and immaterial spirits, cannot be seen with bodily eyes, nor sound sensible words, they assume bodies in which they can both be seen and speak; therefore, sometimes indeed they were seen in the form of fire, but more frequently in the form of a man. Thus, they are read to have appeared very often in Sacred Scripture to many: to Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, the parents of Samson, Manoah and his wife, David, Daniel, and many others; just as also holding a sword in his hand, he was seen by Balaam at the corner of the road. However, those forms and likenesses in which angels appear and speak in the person of God are not everywhere, but in a specific place where the person to whom they appear and speak is present.

With these things thus established, when Scripture says that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, we understand that the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a corporeal form and likeness and spoke to him all those words that were previously addressed to Cain in the person of God; with those words finished, Cain went out from the presence of that likeness or image in which the angel, standing in the person of God, had spoken to Cain. Hence, having left that specific place where the angel had appeared and spoken to him, he proceeded to inhabit the eastern region of Eden. From which he said, "Since God has cursed my land so that it does not bring forth its fruits to me, I will seek the best region for living and working, so that I do not suffer such great calamities and extreme miseries."

But how could it ever have been possible for a most wicked man, born entirely in sins, indeed even conceived in them, with whom malice always grew until it expanded into the highest crime, to approach that most delightful place to inhabit, from which his parents were expelled because of sin, and which heavenly spirits, the

Cherubim, were placed by God to guard? Could he have deceived the angels with his wickedness, or, while they were either unsuspecting or surely sleeping, secretly entered that place and lived there without their knowledge? But surely these are absurdities that cannot be tolerated. We say, therefore, that Cain did not inhabit the region in which that most delightful garden, full of all pleasures, planted and cultivated by the hand of God, was; but he lived not far from that place, in the eastern region near that place.

Thus, he dwelt in the region opposite that most pleasant place, and he did not stray far from the earthly paradise, which turned out to be a great punishment for him. For since he was very greedy and desirous of earthly possessions, and, on the other hand, was greatly pressed by want and poverty and tormented by extreme destitution, knowing that the place from which he did not dwell far was most pleasant, most delightful, most fertile, and abounding and laden with the best fruits: he could not help but be greatly afflicted by the pain and sorrow of being near that place and not being able to reach its fruits. Just like the ancient tales of Tantalus say, who, because of a cruel crime, in which he boiled his slain son, was thrust by the gods into the underworld and tortured by perpetual hunger and thirst, could not grasp the waters of the Eridanus river receding from his lips, nor seize the most beautiful and sweetest fruits hanging above his head, as they fled from him when he tried to grasp them: becoming more unfortunate the closer he had the goods of happiness; hence Tantalus was called "ταλάντατον," meaning "most unfortunate"; thus indeed was Cain. See how even good things turn into punishment and loss for the wicked: just as for those who love God, all things work together for good, even bad things themselves.

It is said, however, that he lived in the land of Nod, which can be understood in two ways: first, that he lived in a land wandering and fugitive, as it was said to him above, and thus the Chaldean Paraphrast interprets it; or that he lived in a land which is called by

the name Nod, as the Greek text seems to have it. But perhaps that region in which he lived was called by that name from the event, because Cain lived there as a wanderer and fugitive; for "נֹד" indeed signifies mobility.

Verse 17: "Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch."

The Hebrew text reads: "And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Chanok; and he was building a city, and he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Chanok."

Thus reads the Chaldean Paraphrast.

The Greek text has: "Conceiving, she bore, and he called the city by the name of his son, Enoch."

The wording differs, but in substance, there is no difference.

The common opinion among the Hebrews holds that Eve conceived and bore twins in each conception. Cain, having become a man, chose the woman born and raised with him as his wife by the right of a sibling marriage. And as Rabbi Abrabanel says here, seeing himself destitute and abandoned, deprived of all human society because of his brother's murder, and even more so because he was expelled from the land of his father Adam's habitation, Cain sought to procreate children to be with him and thus begot Chanok.

But whether Eve bore twins in each birth is of no importance, although it is neither far from the truth nor from plausibility: for she could have conceived and given birth to more children than Scripture has so far recounted. Scripture later mentions that Adam had sons and daughters, though it does not specify the singular births of daughters or take into account the other sons born. Indeed, it is most likely that many sons were born to Adam from Eve while Abel was still alive; for Adam himself was a man perfect in natural

strength and generative power: Eve, too, was exceedingly fruitful in giving birth every year. These two sons are mentioned first by Scripture because of their significance. It should be certain that Cain took only his sister as his wife, by whom he begot Enoch.

Nor is Cain to be blamed for marrying his sister, given that it is written: "No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord." Necessity compelled this action so that the human race, which was initially extended in a straight line through Adam's few offspring, might spread laterally and grow immensely, as the Lord had commanded: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." Because of this necessity, it was lawful for Cain to take as his wife the woman who was his sister by sibling right. Once that necessity was gone, divine law prescribed that no close relationships of the first or second degree should be touched in marriage. By a decree of the Senate, third and fourth degree relationships were also deemed incestuous and it was prohibited to celebrate marriages within the fourth degree of kinship; for all are bound by the bond of consanguinity up to that limit, since they descend and draw origin from the same stock and original source by natural propagation.

But why, someone might ask, cannot those bound by a close bond of consanguinity mutually marry and contract marriage? And what is marriage properly? And should Cain's marriage be considered a sacrament?

Marriage, indeed, as we may begin from the etymology of the name, is called "matrimonium," as if "matris munium," that is, the duty and office of a mother, deriving its name from the mother rather than from the father; not because women become mothers and thus a woman should marry to become a mother: for that is also common to men, that they become fathers; but chiefly because, although in marriage the principal author of procreation is the father, in

procreation the role and work of the woman is much more evident and required than that of the man. For the mother is seen to be much more diligent in bearing, nurturing, and feeding the offspring than the father. The child, being a burden to her after conception, is greatly painful while she bears and brings forth, and very laborious when she has given birth. Hence, although marriage is a common yoke of both, it has taken the name of matrimony more from the woman than the man because the duty more properly belongs to the woman. Conversely, external possession and substance are called patrimony by a more appropriate name because the man, more than the woman, endures the labors of acquiring those goods and storing them up for the children.

Moreover, marriage is a legitimate and lawful union of a man and a woman, a legitimate and marital society and an indissoluble bond, by which each is bound to the other by mutual consent for the purpose of procreation and education of offspring, as is proper. These two requirements are necessarily demanded by the law of marriage: that those marrying are not illegitimate, and that there is legitimate and mutual consent between them; if either is lacking, it invalidates the marriage.

But this union, which we have described, is both a duty of nature and a sacrament. And insofar as it is a duty and office of nature, it is nothing other than a certain marital covenant of human society; and this indeed is spread throughout the entire human race and even infidels contract it. However, it is a true and legitimate marriage if it is contracted legitimately, as is customary: for among infidels the law of nature is found; it is legitimate because it is neither forbidden by divine law nor by natural law, nor by the constitution of the Church: for the Church does not judge those who are outside it; however, it is not a valid marriage because it is not a sacrament and can be dissolved.

But if this covenant of human society between a man and a woman is lawfully made in Christ and in the Church, it is a sacrament instituted by God. Hence the Apostle says to the Ephesians, quoting that sacred text from Genesis: "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh: This is a great mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the Church." It is indeed a sign of the most sacred thing, the perpetual marriage and indissoluble union of Christ with the Church, when the Word, assuming our nature, became flesh, joined to it with the highest love.

This marriage also requires, to be legitimate, valid, and completely indissoluble, that it be made between legitimate persons, otherwise, it is invalid. The most illegitimate persons are those who are closely related by blood or marriage. Affines are those who contract a relationship through carnal union, in which, since man and woman become one flesh, all the woman's blood relatives are related by marriage to the man. The Lord prohibited the celebration of marriages between affines in Leviticus, so that a son might not marry his father's wife, nor a father his son's wife, nor a grandson his uncle's wife. Finally, it was decreed by the Senate that affines should not marry within the fourth degree of kinship.

Furthermore, those considered illegitimate are blood relatives who derive their origin from the same stock, both those who extend the genealogical line straight up or down, and those who spread the progeny of the first origin laterally. In a direct line, whether ascending or descending, it has never been permitted to marry: a son may not take his mother or grandmother or great-grandmother or great-great-grandmother as a wife; nor may a daughter marry her father or grandfather or great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather; similarly, it has never been allowed for a father to take his daughter or granddaughter or great-granddaughter or great-great-granddaughter as a wife, nor for a mother to take her son or

grandson or great-grandson or great-great-grandson as a husband; for this greatly deviates from reason and the law of nature does not allow such marriages. Laterally, there are brothers and the sons of brothers, nephews and great-nephews, sisters, the daughters of sisters, nieces, and great-nieces. Divine law prescribes that a brother should not take his sister as a wife; the Senate decreed that marriage up to the fourth degree of kinship is prohibited.

But to respond now to what was asked above, having seen what marriage is, why marriage cannot be contracted between parents and blood relatives, even though consanguinity does not annul or dissolve the goods of marriage. Certainly, if marriages were celebrated among blood relatives, the good of friendship, which is most fitting for humans, would suffer great loss. Among those who derive from the same original stock, since they are bound by the bond of blood, the love of friendship usually flourishes most, which is not easily extended to strangers. Therefore, since marriages bring about affinity and generate love, to enhance the reason for friendship and love, they should be contracted with strangers rather than relatives. And since the natural bond of kinship is closely tied up to the fourth degree and begins to fade from there, it was therefore established that after the fourth degree, free and unrestricted marriages may occur, to call back fleeing friendship and restore vanishing love.

But surely the most compelling reason for this matter, as I believe, is that a certain honor and reverence are due to nature along with a certain natural decency; natural decency, rightly inherent to nature, shuns revealing the shame and disgrace of one's own flesh and blood, as occurs in the union of man and woman. Hence, in Leviticus, when the laws for avoiding this matter are promulgated, it is said: "Do not uncover the nakedness... and disgrace;" and similar phrases: "Do not approach a close relative to uncover their nakedness."

And indeed, since marriage is a bond of honor for public justice, it cannot in any way be preserved in the most disgraceful act, from which even brute animals are seen to recoil. We read two examples of this in Aristotle: one of a camel, who, having mounted his covered mother, when he later recognized her, attacked and killed the one who arranged such an event; the other of a horse, who, having similarly mounted his mother, when he recognized her uncovered, fled from her and dashed himself to death. The natural law thus dictates that marriages among blood relatives are illegitimate due to natural decency, so that the disgrace and shame of one's own flesh and blood may not be revealed.

This reason is all the more compelling and strong, the closer the bond of blood and flesh, and as the bond of blood diminishes and natural friendship fades, so does it diminish and fade. Hence, marriage in the first degree is utterly abhorrent and forbidden by all law; in the second degree, it is also prohibited by divine law: for in these, the bond of nature is strongest and more so in the first, therefore it is more execrable and never permitted. The other was initially permitted due to necessity, as we mentioned above; then prohibited by divine law, since natural decency does not equitably allow treating a sister as a wife, or a sister as a wife as if she were a stranger. Marriages of the third and fourth degrees were prescribed by the decree of the Senate, because the bond of blood still binds closely in these degrees.

Therefore, natural decency and the honor owed to nature are the reasons why marriages between blood relatives are not lawful. But when the human race began and was still in its first propagation, nature itself was placed in the utmost peril, so that it had to choose between two options: either to suffer some loss of natural decency in the second degree of descent from the same stock, or to let the entire

nature suffer the greatest loss and perish in utter destruction. For even if Adam had begotten five hundred or a thousand sons from his wife Eve, all of them would undoubtedly die in the end. If the sons had not married their sisters, or if, to put it better, if Adam had not given his sons and daughters in marital union, even though they were all brothers and sisters, the entire human race would have perished together with them, along with nature itself. But nature, with God's guidance, chose the lesser of two evils and preferred to consult nature itself rather than that decency for that time; for virtue was not initially established to destroy and utterly annihilate nature, but rather to preserve it safe and sound, filled with every good.

Thus, Cain was united in marital union with his sister. But Scripture, always most honorable, so as not to propose anything shameful to us that might not appear sufficiently decent by its own nature, presents only what is just and decent by its own nature. It does not say that Cain adhered to his sister or took his sister as a wife; but rather that he knew his wife, discreetly omitting that his wife was also his sister, so that we would not think that what was done then out of necessity could now also be done legitimately and without fault for pleasure.

Finally, since the Sacred Text says that Cain knew his wife, I believe that Cain celebrated his marriage not without the sacrament, so that that union was not only a duty of nature but also a sacrament of marriage. For Scripture, in free and honorable terms, declares his spouse his wife; hence I am led to believe that when Adam saw the sons of his first offspring mature, he celebrated and joined them in marriage, giving his son his daughter as a wife, as was fitting, dictated by right reason and perhaps even commanded or instructed by God.

I believe, however, that this first marriage was celebrated before Cain committed that horrible and execrable crime. For who could

ever be led to believe that after committing such a heinous crime, Adam would have wanted or been able to give his daughter in marriage to such a wicked son to procreate offspring, the same son who had so cruelly killed his grown and adult brother with his own hand? Therefore, this marriage was contracted before the crime, even though Scripture, in the order and sequence of the text, refers to it later when it is about to discuss Cain's progeny.

To his first son, whom his wife bore him, he gave the name Enoch, which means instructed, instituted, or dedicated, perhaps because he instructed him in his skills and dedicated him to earthly labors; for he engaged only in earthly exercises and mechanical arts. Hence, it follows: "And he built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch."

Those most holy Fathers, who pleased God by their faith, expecting and not receiving the promises, but seeing and greeting them from afar, nevertheless, with hope and spirit yearning for them and desiring to be united with heavenly citizens, never built earthly cities; but dwelled in the land as strangers; living in tents and tabernacles, they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, signifying that they were seeking a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one; they expected a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God; for God prepared a city for them and therefore is not ashamed to be called their God.

But Cain, punished by the deserved condemnation of his crimes and wicked deeds, never to enter that heavenly city nor to be granted eternal happiness, nor in any way to partake of eternal goods, chose the vilest land as his inheritance, and, disregarding the heavenly city and its celestial citizens, built an earthly city and wanted to be known as an earthly citizen. And since he did not build that city for the honor and glory of God, nor for God's worship, nor in God's name, he did not give it any name related to divine matters; instead,

he named it after his son, because he built it not for God, but for his son.

Rabbi Abrabanel says that Cain abandoned the work of cultivating the land because of the curse and took up the work of building. However, the Hebrew text says that he "was building": perhaps because of his wandering nature, he could not continuously pursue the construction, but being always a wanderer and a fugitive, he went back and forth, building, and thus the work was interrupted.

Verses 18 – 19: Moreover, Enoch begot Irad, and Irad begot Maviael, and Maviael begot Mathusael, and Mathusael begot Lamech. Lamech took two wives: the name of one was Ada, and the name of the other was Zillah.

Hebrew text: And to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begot Mahujael, and Mahujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. And Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.

The Greek edition varies greatly in the names: it has: "But Enoch begot Gaidad, and Gaidad begot Maleleel, and Maleleel begot Methuselah."

The reason for the diversity is due to the symbol of Hebrew letters and different pronunciations. The son of Enoch: עֵירָד is said in Hebrew, where the first letter is ע, which is a very dense aspiration that can only be expressed with a living voice, not in writing. It is formed with the aid of the nostrils at the extreme part of the throat and approaches the sound of our "g," pronounced from the lower throat. It is a raven or dove letter and cannot be more aptly designated than by a strangled "g," somewhat approaching the pronunciation of a dark "n." Hence, because that letter is a very dense aspiration, it is sometimes expressed by "h," as in: hebraeus,

where in Hebrew it is ע; sometimes by “g,” as in: Gomorrah, Segor, etc.; occasionally by a dark “n,” in the old manner, as in: הושע נא, hosan na. Some finally consider the letter mute, so that it scarcely presents anything to the ears besides the vowel with which it is moved. Hence our translator rendered Irad, as if that letter were entirely mute; but the Greeks expressed it by “γ,” translating Gidad; but they were deceived in the second letter by the similarity and symbol of the letters, taking ר for ד, because those letters are very similar; hence they said Gidad instead of Girad. In what they say: Gaidad begot Malaleel, they did not correctly express that name. For in Hebrew it is מחויאל, Machuiael; similarly, Methuselah in Hebrew is מתושאל, that is, Mathusael. The Hebrews are accustomed to ridicule us greatly in the pronunciation of some names, especially in aspirations and certain letters pronounced from the lower throat; yet this defect sometimes arises from the scarcity of letters, because we have only one aspiration “h,” but the Hebrews have three: ח, ה, א; and they have the letter ע, which neither we nor the Greeks have a corresponding one for; then they have a double “s”: ס and ש: but we and the Greeks have only one; and a double “z”: ז and צ: whereas we have only one; from which it happens that neither we nor the Greeks can pronounce their names accurately and sound them with our letters. Sometimes, however, this happens due to the defect and error of the translators.

This genealogy of Cain, however, is given so that, as the opinion of many both from our people and from the Hebrews holds, it may reach down to Lamech, who is thought to have killed Cain based on his own confession. What kind of men descended from Cain, whose deeds are not recorded, anyone may notice from their very names.

And Ada bore Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. And the name of his brother was Jubal: he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore

Tubal-cain, who was a forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Hebrew text: And Hada bore Jabal, who was the father of those who inhabit tents and have livestock. And the name of his brother was Jubal: he was the father of all who handle the lyre and pipe. And Zillah also bore Tubal-cain, who polished every work of bronze and iron, or who sharpened every craftsman of bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

The Chaldean translator has: And Hada bore Jabal: he was the chief of those who inhabit tents and own livestock. And the name of his brother was Jubal: he was the chief of those who play on the lyre and know the song of the lyre and flute. And Zillah also bore Tubal-cain, the chief of all who know the work of bronze and iron, etc.

The Greek text has: And Ada bore Jabal: he was the father of those who dwell in the tents of shepherds. And the name of his brother was Jubal: he showed the psaltery and lyre. But Sella also bore Tubal; and he was a forger and smith of bronze and iron.

How rightly did the Lord previously curse Cain! For that curse was not only the infliction of punishment but also a prediction of future events, because from him and his whole posterity nothing good, nothing holy, or anything that had the flavor of divine and heavenly wisdom, emanated; but only earthly works, which distract the human mind and heart from God and divine things; vain works, which smell only of earthly, carnal, and vain wisdom; evil and wicked deeds, all cruel crimes, nefarious wickedness, obscene and most base vices and sins. For behold, he himself first built a city, showing that he longed wholly for earthly things, carried away with all desire for corruptible things, holding celestial and eternal things in no esteem, wanting to have a firm, permanent, and eternal city on

earth and not seeking the future in any way; not wishing to be a pilgrim from the Lord on earth, but to be a citizen of the earth, an exile from heaven, never to be received there.

Imitators of their father's mind and affections, and followers of his works, were the sons of Enoch, Irad, Maviael, Mathusael, Lamech, and those begotten by them: a miserable nation, a sinful people, laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, corrupt children. All of these, Lamech surpassed and far exceeded in perversity of mind, depravity of affections, iniquity of works, enormity of crimes, and the most base obscenity of insatiable lust. Indeed, so that he might indulge more shamelessly and revel more and more in the filthiest licentiousness and luxury of carnal pleasures, he took two wives and was the first to introduce bigamy, contrary to the laws of both nature and God.

For the law of marriage was promulgated both by God and by nature: "A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh"; and this is a great sacrament in Christ and the Church. For Christ is the only spouse, and the Church is His only bride; neither has Christ ever known another bride, nor the Church another spouse. Therefore, bigamy, which is a dual marriage, either with two wives or contracted with one who is corrupt and known by another, opposes this unique union of Christ and the Church. Hence, bigamists are rightly excluded and restrained from holy orders by the decree of the sacred council, as irregular, lest those who represent Christ in the Church, bearing the person of Christ as His vicars, have something contrary and adverse in comparison to Christ's union with the Church, in symbol and analogy.

Thus, Lamech, to indulge his lust and obscene pleasure more excessively and eagerly, bound himself to dual marriage and was the first to take two wives. And from the first wife, he begot two sons

for himself, one of whom was called Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and of shepherds, that is, he first invented the art of making tents and portable houses, such as those used by soldiers and shepherds; he also first taught the art of cattle breeding, hence he is also called the father of shepherds. It is the custom of the Holy Language to call the inventor or principal author of anything, a father. Therefore, he, as the Hebrews say, chose the art of livestock and taught shepherds according to the nature of animals, to separate sheep from goats and kids from lambs, and to aggregate each of their flocks separately. They also say that Jabal was called this and received this name similar to Abel, because Abel chose and taught the art of shepherding.

The other son of Lamech from his first wife was called Jubal, who was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe, that is, he was the inventor of music and devised the lyre and pipe or psaltery and other musical instruments, which greatly contribute to vanity, delights, and pleasures. With such sounds and melodies, those who are earthly-minded are especially delighted. Hence, Blessed Job, speaking of the wicked who prosper, says: "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the pipe. They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to the grave."

The son he had from his second wife was far more wicked; he was a forger and smith of all works of bronze and iron, that is, he invented the craft of smithing, discovered and mined minerals from the earth, worked with iron and bronze, and taught others to do the same, to make weapons and other instruments of war, by which immense cruelty is exercised for violence, plunder, and murder. He wanted to imitate and far more savagely perfect the works of his great-great-grandfather Cain, who killed his brother: for he invented iron weapons for killing and murder; for this reason, I think, he has the name of the one whose work he imitated.

Scripture also mentions his sister, who was called Naamah. They say she invented the art of weaving to make more ornate and noble and precious garments. Rabbi Abrabanel says she invented songs, melodies, and harmonies in chants and psalms, and was therefore called by that name: נַעֲמָה (Naamah), which sounds like delight, pleasantness, and sweetness; and for this reason, she is mentioned here because earlier, her brother from the same father, who invented musical instruments, was mentioned. The Hebrews have in Bereshit Rabba, as the same Rabbi reports, that she was the wife of Noah; he, however, holds that she was indeed a righteous woman and Noah's wife, but not the one from whom Noah's sons were born, but another; she died before the flood.

And Lamech said to his wives Ada and Zillah: "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; listen to my speech; for I have killed a man for wounding me and a young man for striking me. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

Hebrew text: And Lamech said to his wives Hada and Tsillah: "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; listen to my speech; if I have killed a man for wounding me and a young man for striking me: for Cain shall be avenged sevenfold; and Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

Chaldean text: "I have not killed a man, that I should add sins to my death; nor have I killed a young man, that my seed should be destroyed for him; Cain was suspended or deferred for seven generations; shall not Lamech, his son, be seventy-seven?"

Greek text agrees with ours: "For I have killed a man for wounding me and a young man for striking me; because judgment was passed on Cain sevenfold; but on Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

This passage has various and widely differing interpretations from both Hebrew and our sources.

Josephus in "Antiquities" reports that this Lamech was a hunter, who hunted wild animals with a bow and quiver to make clothing from their skins; and when he grew older and his eyesight failed him due to intemperance and aging, he took a young man with him to the hunt to guide him, direct his steps, and point out the wild animals seen from afar; for he had begun to grow blind. It happened one day, as he went out to hunt, that the young man guiding him saw Cain hiding in a dense cave under bushes from afar; for Cain was driven into dense caves and woody, hidden places out of fear. Mistaking him for a wild animal, he told Lamech to shoot an arrow in that direction; the arrow, directed and aimed at a specific spot, struck and killed Cain. When Lamech realized this, he was greatly distressed because the Lord had threatened severe punishments on anyone who killed Cain. In a fit of intense anger, he struck the young man on the head with the bow he was holding and killed him.

Some of the Hebrews say that this young man was Tubal-cain's son, and for this reason, his wives were more horrified by the deed. When his wives heard of this horrendous act, they withdrew from his bed, fearing that they might also be subjected to the miserable calamities decreed by God and suffer the deplorable punishments along with him. Lamech, unable to bear this with a fair mind, urged them to return to him and not to fear the punishment that would come much later. He excused his deed to them, saying: "I have indeed killed a man for wounding me, not by laying in wait for him, nor did I do it willingly, but unwillingly and unknowingly I struck him; and I killed a young man for bruising me because of the intense pain of the previous death, not out of malice or hatred, but immediately inflamed with anger from intense pain. Cain, however, killed his brother deliberately, laying in wait, out of hatred and malice. Therefore, if death for his most grievous guilt was delayed until the seventh generation, the punishment for my crime will be deferred much longer; if he was punished in the seventh generation,

I will not be punished until the seventy-seventh. So do not fear this punishment that will come so long after."

Many follow this interpretation, both among the Hebrews and our own people; but certainly, it supposes much outside of the letter.

We, therefore, have thought it should be explained differently. There is, however, one expression in the text: כִּי (ki), which among many other meanings, also has these: because, if, and when. According to the first meaning, the Vulgate Edition holds. However, it can also be taken in the remaining ones, so that it may mean if or when. Thus, the context of the text would be: "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; listen to my speech. If or when I have killed a man for wounding me, etc." Certainly, this repeated phrase seems to carry some emphasis and appears to be an applause and expression of joy for the expectation of some great good and to cheer and move depressed minds to great hope, exultation, and future happiness. He says: "Hear my voice, my wives; receive my words with your ears, and do not be afraid or terrified with fear of some miserable calamity or deplorable disaster. For when did I kill a man for wounding me, or when did I destroy a young man for bruising me, as Cain did, who killed his brother, who was young in age but a man in perfect and entire virtue? If Cain, who killed his brother from bruising and anger with his wound, lived for such a long time and saw his sons up to the seventh generation, unpunished by death, will not Lamech, who did not commit these evils, much more see his offspring long-lived up to the seventy-seventh generation? That is: will I not live much longer and see many more sons and generations of sons, weaving a much longer genealogy? Therefore, you should rejoice, my wives, and exult more and more, not only because you indeed bear sons who are noble, excellent, and most prudent by nature, intellect, skill, and knowledge, but because you will have many more; hence, all generations will call you blessed!"

This interpretation of ours is not only not contradicted by the Hebrew text, but the Chaldean Paraphrase wonderfully supports it. However, if we simply wish to explain this text as it lies in our edition, we will say: "Do not be terrified, my wives, nor shrink from me because I have killed a man for wounding me and a young man for bruising me. Do not let the horror of the deed draw you away from my marriage; for behold, Cain also killed his brother. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, that is, whoever kills Cain will pay many penalties, for God has threatened many calamities if anyone kills Cain, much more will anyone who dares to kill me pay more penalties and suffer more calamities. For I killed a man not by design, not with certain malice, not by ambush, as Cain did, but simply in my wound, and a young man in my bruise out of immediately rising anger. This was a pure and simple accident, not premeditated or planned. Therefore, if anyone is afraid to kill Cain, such a wicked man, because of the threatened many penalties, much more will they fear to kill me, for they will pay greater penalties. This is what he means by: 'If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,' that is, whoever kills Cain will suffer many penalties; 'truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold,' that is, whoever kills Lamech will pay much more and greater penalties."

Verse 25: Adam again knew his wife, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth, saying: "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed."

Hebrew text: And Adam again knew his wife, and she bore a son, and called his name Seth: "For God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed."

Chaldean text: "Because the Lord has given me another son."

Greek text: "Because the Lord has raised up for me another offspring."

After the Divine Scripture narrated the genealogy of Cain and extended it up to Lamech, since it professedly intends to narrate only the genealogy of Christ, who according to the flesh descended from Adam, as Blessed Luke in his Gospel describes the genealogy of Christ, reaching from Christ back to Adam, it returns again to Adam and his wife, saying: "Adam again knew his wife."

Some of the Hebrews give this explanation of the context of this passage, saying that when Lamech's wives withdrew from his bed because of the horror of his deed, he had them summoned before Adam, who was the judge at that time. And when Adam ordered the wives to return to Lamech, they replied: "And why do you not return to your wife, from whom you have withdrawn for many years since the death of Abel?" Therefore, Adam, so as not to impede the growth and multiplication of human offspring by his example, returned to his wife, and knowing her again, begot a son named Seth. They say the reason Adam had withdrawn from his wife's company was that because of her, he was expelled from the paradise of pleasure and cast into this place of miseries; and because that tree, which the woman had given him to eat, had infused evil desire and the lust of intercourse into his members.

We, however, say there is another reason for this context. For Adam, through divine revelation, had already known that the Word of God would come in the flesh to uplift fallen man from sin and to redeem and save him from the tyrannical power of the devil. And having known, through the inspiration of God's Spirit, that the entire generation and progeny of Cain would be utterly destroyed by the waters of the flood before the coming of the Messiah the Savior, he realized that the Messiah would not be born from his descendants. For it was not fitting that the most holy seed, in whom all generations and all nations would be blessed, should spring from that most wicked and accursed root of Cain; indeed, Cain was cursed particularly because no faithful, holy, or righteous offspring would

ever spring from his root. Therefore, Adam decided to focus on a new generation, from which Christ would be born according to the flesh, and to once again join with his wife.

He was one hundred and thirty years old when he engaged in the work of this new generation; hence it is clear that this could not have been done after the aforementioned deed of Lamech, even if it is placed later in the context of the narrative. For within that time frame, seven generations of Cain could not have been completed, especially since at that time, people did not marry and beget children prematurely as they do now; and particularly because Lamech is said by the Hebrews themselves to have had dim eyesight and to have been of old age. How then could seven generations of men have passed within the span of one hundred and thirty years, and Lamech, who is in the seventh generation, be old and with failing eyesight?

The Sacred Scripture, therefore, disdained to pursue further the generations of Cain, as from him, like a source of iniquity and root of all sin, only wicked and criminal men would emerge; hence, that accursed progeny was to be utterly destroyed. Moses saw the wickedness of this generation gradually increasing, like a harmful humor spreading through the entire body; he stopped the onslaught of malice and did not even consider the subsequent generations from Cain's progeny worthy of memory. But, wishing to explain to us how God consoled Adam and Eve and alleviated their grief, which had been inflicted upon them by the fratricidal hand raised against Abel, and with the progeny of Cain erased from the catalog of the world's generations, he seriously discusses the chosen and enduring genealogy. He returns to the first parents, the protoplasts of human nature, to begin the context of the Christ-bearing genealogy, which he had initially intended. Thus he says: "Adam again knew his wife," for the reason we mentioned, "and she bore a son who would be holy and righteous, from whose lineage the chosen progeny would come, from whom a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, a people for his own possession would emerge; from which, ultimately, the Redeemer and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, would be born, in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed."

Therefore, the pious mother Eve rejoices at the birth of the new offspring, and exhilarated by the birth of such a son, she, full of joy, utters a voice of exultation, praise, and thanksgiving: "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." How many sorrows, how many disturbances of mind, and how many heartaches do we think the pious mother Eve felt over the death of her son! What heavy sadness and grief weighed down and overwhelmed her mind and spirit, as if it had lulled her into the deepest sleep? For she loved him deeply and beyond what can be believed; younger children are indeed dearer to their mothers. And he was especially dear to her because he was naturally admirable, handsome in form, adorned with good manners, serious and modest, simple and humble, innocent and honest, and chaste: so that she never saw anything vicious in the boy, and from a young age, she saw nothing but virtuousness in his thoughts, speech, and actions. Therefore, the pious and sweetest mother, seeing in her son an admirable nature, physical beauty, pleasant appearance, sweetness of speech, elegance of manners, affability in conversation, prudent simplicity of a pure mind, innocence, and sanctity of life, could not help but love him intensely and be carried away with the greatest love for him.

When she felt that such a great and precious son had been killed by a cruel death, when she first saw that bitter and cruel spectacle of her slain son's horrendous and fateful death, when, I say, she saw the lifeless, bloody body of her beloved son, with wounds gaping all over, torn and mangled; who can imagine how vehemently grief seized her, how keenly a sword pierced her soul, how cruel and bitter a blade transfixed her maternal heart, what pitiable and

sorrowful cries she emitted? "Woe is me, my son, my son, Abel! Abel, my son! Who killed you, my son? Who wounded you like this? Who destroyed you, the hope of my life? Who broke you, the staff of my old age? Who lost you, the light of my eyes? Who so cruelly deprived you of life, the solace of my life? Woe is me, my son! Who will let me die with you? Who will let me descend into the underworld and see you, my most beloved son, my son, my son, Abel, my son? What wicked beast has so torn your body? What bloody and savage beast has thus shredded your flesh? Woe is me, unfortunate woman! Woe is me, pitiful and lamentable mother, who first saw the triumph of death in my most beloved son, who has this mournful funeral before my eyes, who sees this pitiable spectacle! I was called Eve, the mother of the living: and behold, I am the first to see my son dead, killed by such a cruel death! I mourned before, I lamented with the gravest sorrow over my transgression, because of which, besides other miserable calamities, the sentence of death was also pronounced on me. But I did not yet know the face of death, I had not yet seen it. Now, however, alas, my son, how great my grief, how increased is the reason for my mourning! Behold me, wretched! I see the first appearance of death introduced into life: violent death, immense and most cruel: death perpetrated by a most wicked son against his brother born of the same father and the same mother: who had done no harm, who had never brought evil upon anyone: against you, my most beloved son, against you, the light of my eyes, against you, the solace of my life, against you, the hope of my salvation. Woe is me, my son, my son, Abel! Abel, my son! O pitiable mother! O fate deplorable, full of so many bitternesses! Who will console me, my son? Rather, who will ever be able to console me? My soul will refuse consolation, I will never receive comfort, I will always mourn you, my son, my tears will be my bread day and night, my drink without measure, until God looks upon my affliction and He Himself consoles me!"

Thus, for many years, the pious mother mourned her son; until God appointed for her another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed. Then it seemed to her that a new light had arisen, bringing joy, honor, and celebration; and exulting, she said: "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." After Abel's death, she said, I was always grieving and mourning for the death of such a son until this day; now let all sorrow depart, for God has given me another son in place of Abel, similar to him, not differing from him at all: and since God gave me this son, He Himself placed this seed in my womb, so no one shall ever take this son from me. Therefore, I will call him Seth. Seth means "appointed."

Verse 26: A son was also born to Seth, whom he called Enosh. He began to invoke the name of the Lord.

Hebrew text: And to Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. Then it began to call upon the name of the Lord יהוה (YHWH).

Chaldean text: Then in his days, the sons of men began to invoke or pray in the name of the Lord.

Greek text: He began to invoke the name of the Lord God.

The Greeks took the word הוּחַל (huḥal), "began," for יָחַל (yaḥal), which means "hoped."

This passage is not simply interpreted. Some of the Hebrews, especially Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, as Rabbi Abrabanel reports, explain it thus: Before Enosh, people did not know the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton יהוה (YHWH), but used the name אֵל (El) in divine praises. However, in the days of Enosh, they began to invoke God by the Tetragrammaton name.

However, the majority of the Hebrews refer this to idolatry, saying that in the time of Enosh, people began to worship idols and

attribute the divine name to the works of their hands, offering prayers to statues and images.

But I could never approve of this interpretation; for I do not think it can be found anywhere in the entire Holy Scripture that the invocation of the name of the Lord יהוה (YHWH) is understood as the worship of idols and their invocation. For that ineffable and most revered name is attributed by Scripture only to the true God, and nothing, however holy and venerable, is considered worthy of that name besides God.

I do not believe it likely that the worship of idols began at that time, given that the faith in the creation of the world and the one Creator God was still fresh, with the first man and woman formed by God still living. Moreover, there is no mention of idolatry before the Flood. Furthermore, if this passage were about the worst kind of idolatry, it would certainly have emanated from that most wicked progeny of Cain, from someone in his generation who might have been contemporary with Enosh. But why not attribute it to the most wicked author or one of Cain's sons, who have been listed, and who would have been that wicked contemporary?

I know what many of them say: that Jabal made tents to place idols in, and that Jubal used musical instruments, the lyre and the pipe, before idols to honor them. But surely Scripture does not mention this; if it were so, such a great crime would certainly not have been overlooked, just as it did not remain silent about the crime of their father.

We, therefore, interpret this passage as follows. "A son was also born to Seth, whom he begot"; the time when he begot him is recorded in the following chapter of Scripture; "and he called his name Enosh": אֶנוֹשׁ (Enosh), which is interpreted as man: it is derived from a word that signifies pain, affliction, and weakness. Hence, in the Psalm we read: "Let the nations know that they are but

men" (אָנױשׂ); and again: "What is man (אָנױשׂ), that you are mindful of him?" As if to say: a thing of no importance and almost nothing. For this reason, perhaps, Seth called his son thus because, to the people of his time, he seemed weak, contemptible, and of almost no value.

But God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and the ignoble and contemptible things of the world, and those that are not, to bring to nothing those that are; so that no flesh should glory in His presence. God was pleased to choose this weak, infirm, and contemptible man to restore His worship, piety, and religion in the world, and to convene and gather faithful assemblies and congregations to praise God, invoke His most holy name, and seek His help with holy prayers.

Thus, it is said: "Then it began to call upon the name of the Lord"; our beautiful edition translates it with a paraphrase: "He began to invoke the name of the Lord." Through his works, it was accomplished that the name of the Lord was invoked in churches, that is, faithful congregations and assemblies, and divine praises were celebrated in a formal assembly. Hence, all his descendants deserved to be called the sons of God due to the divine worship they solemnly celebrated.

Chapter Five

Verses 1 – 2: This is the book of the generation of Adam: on the day when God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, on the day they were created.

Hebrew Text: This is the book, or this is the account of the generations of Adam: on the day, or from the day, when God created man, in the image of God he made him. He created them male and female, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, that is, man, on the day of their creation.

Chaldean Interpreter has: This is the book of the generations of Adam: on the day when the Lord created Adam, in the likeness of God he made him. He created them male and female, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, on the day they were created.

Greek Text: This is the book of the generation of men, on the day God made Adam, in the image of God he made him. He made them male and female, and blessed them, and named their name Adam, on the day he made them.

Some of our people consider these words to be like an epilogue and a conclusion of what was written above. We, however, think it is rather the beginning of the following generations. For Moses, wishing to weave a catalog of human generations, how the progeny of human nature grew and spread far and wide over the earth, first established Adam, the primary root and stem and original beginning of it, in the first place. "I wish," he says, "to narrate a catalog of human generations, to find the chosen people of God, from whom Christ the King and Savior of the world, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, is to be born. Therefore, I do not establish the beginning of just any race of men, nor do I wish to trace the origin from some parent of a particular family: but

from the first parent of all men, the protoplast, from the day on which human nature was created by God the author, I seek the very first origin of men and from there begin my narration: This is the book of the generations of Adam: that is, this is the account of human generations. For ספר (sefer) not only means to write, whence a book is also called by that word, but also to narrate and a narration; and אדם (Adam) is not only the name of the protoplast and first parent of men but of the whole human species; whence it is said: And he called their name Adam. "I begin," he says, "the narration of the genealogy of men, not of some men, but of all in general, from the beginning, from the day when the Lord God created man, that is, instituted human nature; for it follows: He made him in the likeness of God; he created them male and female: for in male and female human nature perfectly consists for propagation."

Both, however, were made in the likeness of God, bearing the image of God in their soul according to reason, dominion, and sovereignty. According to reason, indeed, in the mind, with knowledge or understanding and love, by which they are carried towards God and conformed to Him; and for this reason, God, as He Himself indeed has sovereignty over all things both visible and invisible, since He is the creator and maker of all things, willed that this rational animal, formed to His image and likeness, should enjoy the authority over all visible things and be distinguished as similar to God and a demigod.

And He blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth... and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky... and over every beast and all the earth. This is a twofold blessing, just as man's parts are twofold, and each responds to one of them. Be fruitful and multiply. The first blessing is whereby He bestowed the most fruitful power for generating and procreating

children in the body; to have dominion over all animals, however, is a blessing for the soul, which excels over all visible things. Hence David said: What is man that you are mindful of him? or the son of man that you visit him? You have made him a little lower than the angels, or than God, according to the Hebrew truth. According to the mind and reason, man is subject only to God; therefore it follows: You have crowned him with glory and honor and set him... over the works of your hands, you have put all things under his feet.

The Scripture then adds: And He called their name Adam on the day they were created. Just as "man" among the Latins is of common gender and includes both sexes, just as in Greek: ὁ καὶ ἡ ἄνθρωπος (ho kai hē anthrōpos): so in Hebrew אָדָם (Adam) is of both genders, encompassing the entire species. However, by a certain prerogative, this name was attributed to the man who was first formed and who was the first creator of men; therefore, not infrequently, the first man is distinguished by this name, as follows immediately.

Verses 3-5: Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and begot a son in his own likeness and image, and he called his name Seth. The days of Adam after he begot Seth were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and he begot in his likeness, as his own image, and he called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after he begot Seth were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Adam, which he lived, were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

Thus the Chaldean text also has it.

Greek Text: However, it varies; it reads: Adam lived two hundred and thirty years and begot in his form and image, and he named his

name Seth. The days of Adam, which he lived after he begot Seth, were seven hundred years.

Moses now begins to discuss the catalog of generations and to weave the genealogies of men from the beginning. Starting from Adam, the first man, he says: Adam lived one hundred and thirty years; it is written as thirty and one hundred years in Hebrew; for thus the Hebrew phrasing often places the smaller number before the greater.

The Septuagint translators, for some unknown reason, always doubled the hundred years before generation. Hence, they have Adam living for two hundred and thirty years: but the subsequent years of generation they reduced by that number; where our text, which conforms to the Hebrew truth, has Adam living eight hundred years after the generation of Seth, they have seven hundred years.

Some have doubted, as often happens in many other cases, whether these years enumerated in these generations are solar years as they are for us now, since our year is said to have been arranged by the astrologer Eudoxus of Cnidus, as Lucan writes: "Nor will my year yield to the annals of Eudoxus"; later it was discovered by Hipparchus, then by Ptolemy, and finally brought to its best form by Caesar. Therefore, many think that the years enumerated were lunar years.

The lunar year is the span of time in which the moon completes its orbit through the zodiac; thus, the year of Saturn is said to be thirty solar years because, in that time span, that planet completes its circuit of the firmament. Jupiter's year, however, is twelve years; Mars' is two; the Sun's is one; and the periods of Venus and Mercury are nearly the same as the Sun's. The lunar year, however, is completed in twenty-nine days and twelve hours; for in that time, it completes its circuit of the ecliptic. Therefore, a lunar year is

scarcely a solar month; for twelve lunar months exceed a lunar year by eleven days, that is, twelve lunations.

But certainly, what they think is true cannot be true by any means. Indeed, in this series of generations, Mahalalel is said to have begotten Jared at sixty-five years; if these were lunar years, he would have been a child of five solar years when he begot a son. Similarly, Enoch is said to be sixty-five years old when he begot Methuselah; and he would scarcely have been five and a half solar years. In the generations of Shem, Salah is said to be thirty years old when he begot Eber; indeed, if these were lunar years, he would have been scarcely two and a half solar years. What could be more absurd than for a two-year-old child to beget a son? Similarly, in the remaining generations, which are impossible. Finally, it is said of Abraham: Now the days of Abraham's life were one hundred seventy-five years: and he died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. But one hundred seventy-five lunar years scarcely make fifteen solar years. Is a fifteen-year-old man old and advanced in age? Moses would also have been ten years old when he died, for he is said to have died at the age of one hundred twenty years, if lunar years are to be taken.

Thus, the argument that the years mentioned in these genealogies are lunar years does not hold up. The ages recorded must be understood as solar years, given the context and the implications of the ages mentioned for fathering children and reaching old age.

Nor should lunar years be understood here as the span of twelve lunations within a solar year, which is eleven days shorter than a solar year. Many interpret it this way, thinking that it should be understood so because Moses was writing to the Hebrews, who use that lunar year. However, the Jews do not use the lunar year exclusively; otherwise, Passover would have entirely circled the year. Indeed, by the command of the law, they are required to

celebrate Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. If they calculated time by lunar years, Passover would be celebrated eleven days earlier each year, eventually circling the entire year.

Thus, the Hebrews use solar years, and they are said to use lunar years only insofar as they begin the year from the first new moon after the vernal equinox. For this is what the law commands: This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Furthermore, the Hebrews themselves understand and explain this passage in terms of solar years, as the Rabbi Abrabanel discusses at length. Besides, even if lunar years were to be understood here, they would indeed coincide with the same time period; for lunar years, through intercalations made every third year, where an additional thirteenth lunation is added to the twelve, equal the solar years. Therefore, the same time period is indicated.

Thus, solar years are to be understood when it is said: Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and subsequently in all other places and throughout the entire course of Scripture. For the solar year is the most ancient, not discovered after many ages. Indeed, it was designated by the ancient and wisest astrologers of Egypt, even before writing was invented, through hieroglyphics depicting a serpent biting its own tail, drawn in the form of a circle; for the year is like a ring, returning upon itself, with the beginning of the new year following the end of the past year. Finally, the lights were made for days and years.

And he begot a son in his own likeness and image.

God made man in His own likeness and image; man also begets a son in his own likeness and image. Indeed, that divine image, in which man was made, though it can be said to be natural in some sense, because it is inherent in nature and consists in its reason, more fittingly deserves to be called artificial, since it is the creation of

divine art. For God, the artificer of all things, impressing His image and likeness upon human nature, made it like a divine statue representing divine nature as closely as possible, just as a statue of Hercules or the image of Caesar on a coin. However, the ultimate referents of this likeness and imitation are of entirely different natures. For God is one thing by nature, and man is another, even though man is made in the image and likeness of God; just as Hercules is one thing, and his statue is another, even though the statue imitates him. But indeed, the image and likeness, when a man begets a son, is both natural and connatural, because the father and son are of the same nature and share the same essence of human substance, although each is a different hypostasis and person.

Thus, the sense of Scripture is that Adam begot a son in his own likeness and image, that is, connatural to himself, similar to himself in nature, sharing the same nature, having the same essential nature both in soul and body and in the powers and faculties of both. This, indeed, is to be understood universally of all others as well; for all men propagated from Adam share the same nature and communicate in the human essence that the first man received.

But certainly, what is more particularly said about this son might have been because he more closely imitated the specific nature of his father from birth. This includes the structure of the body, form, figure, features, color, complexion, and finally stature and size, having already reached the age of maturity. Moreover, he imitated his father's piety, religious devotion, faith, purpose, teachings, morals, and the manner and way of living rightly. Therefore, his father, rejoicing in the birth of such a son, called his name Seth, that is, established, or a set foundation, firm, raised up. For he knew that Abel had indeed vanished from the world without leaving offspring; that the generation of Cain was to be wiped out by the waters of the flood, so that not one would remain; but this son was raised up and given to him by God, established and strengthened by eternal

election and predestination, so that his line of succession would remain in the world forever, and he would be like the foundation of a lasting and chosen progeny and generation.

After this chosen son was born, rejoicing in the presence, relationship, and successful succession of such a son, he lived for eight hundred more years. And the total time of his life was nine hundred thirty solar years, and he died: after so many years, he finally ended his life by death; for it is appointed for every man to die once as the punishment for sin. Before sin, indeed, he could not die if he had kept the commandment; but after the sin was committed, he was subjected to the sentence of death so that he would die eventually. And it was not long before he saw the very terrible appearance of death introduced into life in his most beloved son; now he himself, having died by the same sentence, ended his life.

But it is no small difficulty to understand why man is subject to death and dies. Indeed, if each thing consists in its form and act, since the soul of man, which is the act of the body, is incorruptible and immortal, as we have argued above, how is it that man dies if his form never perishes? Certainly, it must be admitted either that when a man dies, the soul also perishes, or that the soul is not the essential form of the body but an assistant form; and that the essential form of man perishes when the body dies, since what informs depends on the sensible dispositions of the matter, which, when removed, dies. Therefore, if the soul is the form of the body, it depends on its dispositions, and when they are corrupted, it will perish. But if it does not perish, then it does not inform; for this will be proven by the dilemma that if it informs and is substantially united to the body, it is certainly united by some disposition: this is certain.

However, the question arises about this union: is it substantial or accidental to the soul? If it is substantial, then when it perishes, as a man dies, the soul itself will also perish; for it cannot remain without what is essential to it. But if it is accidental, then is that accident proper or common? If it is proper, then once it is destroyed, the soul will also be destroyed; for it cannot exist without what is proper to it. But if it is common, then the soul could unite with the body without that union and be united without union, which is impossible.

Therefore, it must be admitted that either the soul dies, or it does not inform, or man does not die.

But since the death of man is manifestly observed daily before our eyes, from these reasons, some have indeed asserted that the soul is mortal and corruptible; others that the body does not inform but assists, like a sailor in a ship and intelligence in the world.

Thus, Plato believed, thinking that man is solely the soul; that the body is not part of man, but an instrument and vehicle of the soul.

Themistius also thought that the soul is assisting and considered it an incorporeal, immortal, and eternal substance, one in number among all men, and believed that man substantially consists in such a form and is nothing other than that form which is called the intellect.

Finally, the Cordovan Averroes, the most impious Muslim, imagined two souls in man: one indeed essential to him, through which he is distinguished from other animals; this he declared to be entirely sensitive with its powers and faculties, organic and brought forth from the power of matter, multiple according to the multitude of men, and perishing with them upon death; the other he posited as intellectual, not informing but assisting, through which man is neither distinguished from others nor assumes his own species. He declared this intellectual soul to be incorporeal and eternal in all

men, one preceding and surviving individuals; yet it is united to each through phantasms so that each one may understand through it. He called this intellect one in substance but multiple concerning the various phantasms of men in which it operates.

But indeed these are the most foolish delusions. Therefore, having progressed thus far, we will first argue: it is impossible for there to be only one rational soul in all men; secondly, having proven that each individual man has his own proper rational soul, we will show that these souls inform their proper bodies; thirdly, we will then discuss the cause of why man dies if his form is immortal and incorruptible.

Firstly, from the unity of the intellect in all men, so many impossibilities follow, that nothing more so; indeed, so many absurdities, that one can hardly refrain from laughing. For it follows that this single intellect would be wise in one person and foolish in another; in one person slow-witted and erring, in another clever and rightly knowing; in one person good and just, in another unjust and wicked; in one person happy, in another miserable; so that in one singular intellect there would be innumerable contrary habits: also, countless contrary and contradictory acts would occur simultaneously and at the same time. But who, even if dreaming, could comprehend this?

Beyond that, another absurdity follows: it is most absurd that the most wicked, insolent, and foolish man would have the most correct, wise, and best intellect; and conversely, that the most prudent and best man would have the most wicked and perverse intellect; indeed, this would be so since the intellect in both would be one and the same, carrying both evil and good with it.

Thirdly, one and the same thing would naturally be in many, almost infinite places simultaneously in time. Are not men in many and almost innumerable distinct and far distant places? If this is

conceded, then any other thing could naturally be in many places simultaneously; for the difficulty is the same in both cases, and the inconvenience is the same.

But tell me, O Averroes, and all who are mad with this folly: how does this singular intellect assist and unite with all men? Since men are dispersed here and there, does it also assist in the intermediate spaces? If you admit this, what operation does that intellect have in those intermediate spaces? Or why do not horses and any other animals also understand, since they also have a cognitive power and share phantasms with us? Certainly, if that intellect is united with phantasms in the intermediate spaces, then horses will also understand. But if you do not admit this, how can that intellectual assisting form unite with many and almost innumerable men, dispersed and spread throughout the whole world, without also assisting in the intermediate spaces, since it is one in number and wholly indivisible and impartible? Clearly, these things are impossible.

Then, if there is only one intellect in number through which all understand, I ask: how do humans differ from each other and from animals? You will say, through the cogitative faculty. But tell me: is this cogitative faculty you imagine a rational soul or not? If you admit it is: then it discourses, thus it understands without that intellect; for there cannot be discourse without intellect, since in discourse there are always universals, which are only recognized by intellect; for sense always pertains to particulars. Therefore, there will be intellect and reason in all men without that intellect you imagine. But if it is not rational, but in itself devoid of reason, then man according to his being will be a brute animal, neither a free animal nor possessing liberty; for where there is no reason, there is no liberty. Indeed, man will be a very beautiful animal and a great miracle of nature if he is a brute animal without reason and liberty.

Furthermore, how does man understand if intellect is separated from him? By phantasms, you will say, because that separated intellect is united with phantasms: therefore, without a phantasm, man does not understand: thus he cannot understand God, intelligences, and spiritual things, but only sensibles; for there are phantasms of these and not of intellectual substances or even spiritual accidents. But who will admit this?

Finally, does this assisting form provide the essential constitution to man or not? If you say no, as Averroes admits, but say that the organic cogitative faculty brought forth from the power of matter constitutes man in being: then the soul of man is a mortal and corruptible form; which is most absurd, and you also abhor this and proclaim against Alexander. Therefore, you are inconsistent and do not even agree with yourself. For you say the soul is immortal, as it truly is; but by this position of yours, you overthrow its immortality and posit it as mortal, and all the absurdities and inconveniences that follow from the mortality of the soul follow without any evasion.

But if it provides the essential constitution to man, as you admit, Themistius: then this soul of yours, since it is one in number among all and remains immortal after death, will be both wise and foolish at the same time; and since it is the primary subject of habits of virtues and vices, it will be adorned with all the habits of virtues and at the same time the foulest sink of all vices; and since it is also the origin and principal agent of good and evil works, it will be the richest in merits and praises of all good and just works and at the same time the most perverse in demerits of the most wicked deeds. Therefore, it will be the most studious and the worst, the most just and the most unjust, indeed the happiest and the most miserable. But who can bear these horrendous monstrosities?

Indeed, this doctrine eradicates all good and corrupts all morals, overturns all laws, destroys all republics, confounds all nature, and

utterly annihilates all true science and philosophy as well as theology. For what would be the distinction between the just and the unjust, the predestined and the reprobate, those to be saved and those to be damned? What would be the reward for virtues and good works and the punishment for vices and crimes? Certainly, if anyone could ever reasonably assert that the same soul of Christ and the most just men is also the soul of Judas and the most wicked men, and that this same soul could be both blessed in the heavenly kingdom and most miserably tortured in the Tartarean fires, who in their right mind would ever admit such a thing?

Therefore, it is absurd and plainly impossible for there to be one rational and intellectual soul in all men; rather, in each person, there is a proper and particular soul, with individual souls in each individual person. From this, no inconvenience or absurdity follows, nor are there any of the inconsistencies that they propose.

They argue that if the intellect were singular, it would indeed be in matter and could not understand universals, since the singular cannot receive the form of the universal. But certainly, this argument is vain and turns against them. For the intellect they propose is either universal or singular in nature. If it is universal, then it will be some kind of Platonic idea, which Aristotle and they so vehemently oppose and reject as most inconvenient and impossible. But if it is singular in nature, then it will be material and unable to receive the forms of universals nor to understand them. Therefore, they are not consistent with themselves. Let them understand then that a singular nature is not an impediment to universal cognition. For even the species representing the singular is plainly singular, receiving singularity from the subject, and is a particular accident: but it is the organ that provides the impediment to its cognition; for the species received in the organ is a corporeal and divisible accident: but nothing such as this can represent the universal, which is immaterial. However, we do not attach the singular intellect to an organ as an

organic power, therefore the species received in the intellect is a spiritual accident, capable of representing the universal in itself.

Setting aside their other delusions, let us now proceed to the second proposition, proving that the rational soul is the essential form of man. This truth has been sufficiently established and confirmed by the sacred council's decree, first at the Council of Vienne under Clement V; it is also found in the Clementines, "On the Supreme Trinity and the Catholic Faith," chapter one; and later at the Lateran Council under Leo X, session 8. Therefore, it must be firmly upheld. However, it will not be out of place to present some reasons here according to natural reason and true philosophy.

Firstly, Aristotle defined the soul as the first act of a physical, organic body having life potentially. The term ἐντελέχεια (entelechia) used there signifies that which perfects, consummates, and completes: which properly is the act of informing. However, a sailor cannot be called the ἐντελέχεια of a ship.

Secondly, if it is the first act, it is not united to the body only according to operation, like a sailor to a ship; for operation is the second act: the first act is the form from which the operation emanates.

Furthermore, in man, there is only one soul, and that soul is rational, containing within its power the sensitive and vegetative functions, just as a quadrilateral includes a triangle. This is evident from the fact that the actions of the soul mutually impede each other: contemplation hinders sensation and even nutrition, and sensation hinders contemplation. If these actions came from multiple souls, they would not necessarily impede each other, but each would perform its function without hindrance from the other. Therefore, there is one soul from which these actions arise.

Moreover, if three distinct souls were posited in man, as Plato posited: the intellective in the brain, the sensitive in the heart, and the vegetative in the liver, then these three distinct particular souls would constitute a triple individual in man, that is, each would constitute its own individual, and thus man would be a triple individual in a triple species; and thus man would not be a distinct species but rather a composite whole formed by the aggregation of what is constituted by those three souls.

But if you claim that these three distinct souls form one, how, I ask, are these multiple distinct souls united to form and compose one entity? Therefore, if there is only one soul in man, it will not be as a mover, but as a form; for a mover is only in one part of the movable entity: the soul, however, is in the whole body and each of its parts; since the operations of the soul are perceived in the whole body and each of its parts, certainly the powers and faculties of the soul will be in the whole body. If its powers are present throughout the whole body, then so is the soul; for if only the power and operation were there without the soul, which is their principle, certainly they would be there with another form and forcibly, like heat in water; but it is most absurd that natural powers and operations are violent; indeed, it is impossible: for the natural and the violent are contrary to each other.

Furthermore, the proper operation of any thing emanates from its proper form. But understanding, even through discourse, is the proper operation of man: therefore, it will be from his proper form; we understand, however, only through the intellective soul.

Moreover, whatever is in us is either matter, form, or a composition of these. But indeed the soul is in us; for we experience ourselves understanding: just as we experience seeing the sun larger than the whole earth. This experience, however, is understanding, because it cannot occur through the senses. This understanding, since it is an

immanent act, will be formally in us: therefore, the intellective power, from which and in which it exists, will also be in us; thus the soul, which is the principle of this power, will be in us. Since the soul is in us, and it is neither matter nor a composite, it certainly will be the form of our matter, that is, of our body.

But Plato said that man is solely the soul; the body, however, is its vehicle and instrument. But this cannot stand in any way. For man is a rational animal: therefore, he is a corporeal substance, animated, sensitive, and rational. Therefore, if man according to his nature is a corporeal substance, he cannot be solely the soul, which is a simple form, not a body. Therefore, the soul is not the man, but part of the man, essentially constituting, integrating, and perfecting him. Therefore, the singular and proper soul is in each individual man, informing the body and constituting it in being.

We must now address the third point we proposed: namely, why, if this form of man is immortal and incorruptible, does he himself nevertheless die? It is not so easy to answer this question; however, with God's guidance, by laying some foundational principles, we will easily untangle this Gordian knot.

First, it should be noted that the rational soul has a nature such that it is neither purely an intellectual substance nor purely a sensitive form; rather, it is a kind of intermediate substance encompassing both. It is intellectual to such an extent that it is also the principle of sensing, by which it differs from intelligences; and it is sensitive to such an extent that it is also the principle of understanding, by which it differs from pure forms. However, it contains both under one simple substance, from which it is often called ὁρίζων (horizōn, boundary) of spiritual and corporeal forms. From this arises the fact that the rational soul is, according to its essence, an informing act: for otherwise, it would not comprehend the sensitive nature; yet it is a form in such a way that it does not entirely depend on the matter it

actuates, but can exist separately according to its nature of understanding. Hence, from the soul emanate twofold powers and capacities: some insofar as it is the principle of sensing and a form; and these indeed are sensitive powers attached to organs, common to both soul and body, since they proceed from it insofar as it is the form of the body; some are intellectual powers proper to it, which emanate from it insofar as it is capable of existing by itself. The same is to be understood about operations, which are carried out through these middle powers. Therefore, the soul, insofar as it is sensitive, informs the body; but insofar as it is intellectual, it does not; and the former is called the lowest part of the soul, while the latter is called the highest, because it does not use bodily organs. Hence, it is said that the intellect is sometimes separate; not that it is actually separated and understood as subsisting by itself, or more abstract than the soul; but because the soul's power is not organic, nor does it adhere to the body in such a way that it cannot be separated from it: for it is non-extended and immaterial.

Therefore, the rational soul, according to the intellect, can exist and operate by itself; but according to the senses, it requires well-disposed bodily organs. Since it is united to the body according to its lower portion, inasmuch as it holds powers and capacities of vivifying, vegetating, and providing sensation, so that it can vivify, vegetate, and provide sensation to the body, it requires a certain disposition in the body — for sensation consists in a certain harmony. Therefore, the proportion of the mixture of elements and primary qualities, the balance of temperament and complexion, the multiplicity of organs optimally disposed, the agility of subtle spirits, both natural, vital, and animal, the abundance of vital moisture, and the sufficient ratio of vivifying heat are required. These bodily dispositions are necessary for the soul to remain united with the body; if any of these is either absent or significantly deficient, the union of the soul and body will be dissolved and

entirely corrupted with these dispositions. For the harmony of the organs is disrupted, without which, since sensation cannot exist, the soul, which informs the body through sensation, is separated from the body.

Therefore, death occurs to man, even though his form is immortal, because the soul is separated from the body; and the cause of separation is that the union of the soul with the body depends on the dispositions of the body: when these are corrupted, the union is dissolved, and the bonds of connection are broken. These dispositions indeed happen to the soul; for the soul can exist by itself without them, because it does not entirely depend on them; but they do not happen to the union, which is necessarily required; therefore, when these dispositions are present, the union exists, and when they are corrupted, the union is destroyed.

The dilemma initially posed is plainly empty. For how does it follow that if the union of the soul is substantial or proper, when it is destroyed, the soul itself is also corrupted: if, however, it is entirely accidental, that it can be united without the union? Certainly, I will argue thus: it is clear that the matter itself is united to the form of fire: if therefore that union is essential to the matter, when it is destroyed, the matter will be corrupted; similarly, if it is accidental and proper; if, however, it is common: then the matter is united without union. See how empty that dilemma is, how beautiful the inference: if the union of the soul is accidental: therefore it will be united without union; therefore, if whiteness is accidental to man, he will be white without whiteness. Therefore, I say that the soul does not depend on the dispositions of the body, but the union of the soul depends on them; and that union can be separated from the soul, but not in such a way that it remains united; just as whiteness can be separated from a man, but not in such a way that he remains white.

Now, therefore, having considered these points, we return to the proposition from which we digressed, and we say that Adam indeed died, not through the corruption of the soul, but through its separation from the body. The soul was separated due to the corruption of the natural dispositions, upon which the union depends, especially due to the deficiency of vital moisture, which, being daily restored in an increasingly deteriorated state by nutritional moisture, eventually failed, along with the vital heat and spirits being far more weakened and dissolved than they could sustain the organs of the senses and the whole body. Therefore, with the moisture and heat, together with the spirits, being consumed, and the harmony destroyed by excessive dryness and coldness, he died.

Verses 6-8: Seth lived for one hundred and five years and begot Enos. And Seth lived, after he begot Enos, for eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Seth lived five years and one hundred years, and begot Enos. And Seth lived, after he begot Enos, seven years and eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were twelve years and nine hundred years, and he died.

The Hebrew phrase is, as we said above, to place smaller numbers before larger ones, possibly because, according to nature, a smaller number precedes a larger one, as it is closer to unity from which all species of numbers emanate. However, this does not affect the understanding of the Scripture. For the Chaldean interpreter reverses this phrase; for he has:

And Seth lived one hundred and five years and begot Enos. And Seth lived, after he begot Enos, for eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

The Greeks, as usual, subtract one from the following centuries of years and add it to the previous, making it two hundred and five years when Seth begot [Enos].

Here, some Hebrews, especially Rabbi Abrabanel, say that because Adam was dominated by his spirit and lived separated from his wife for one hundred and thirty years, his days were so prolonged into old age that he lived for nine hundred and thirty years. But since Seth contracted marriage and copulation with his wife twenty-five years earlier than his father — for he was one hundred and five years old when he begot Enos, while Adam was one hundred and thirty — therefore, after begetting his son, he lived for eight hundred and seven years, never again separated from his wife, and begot sons and daughters. And just as he hastened marriage twenty-five years before his father, so his days of life were shortened by eighteen years compared to the days of his father; for Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years, while he lived for nine hundred and twelve.

Verses 9-11: Enos lived ninety years and begot Cainan. After his birth, he lived eight hundred and fifteen years and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Enos lived ninety years and begot Kenan. And Enos lived, after he begot Kenan, fifteen years and eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enos were five years and nine hundred years, and he died.

The Greeks have: Enos lived one hundred and ninety years and begot, etc. Here, Enos hastened marriage forty years before Adam. For when he was ninety years old, he begot a son, after which, surviving eight hundred and fifteen years, he begot many sons and daughters. Because of this, all the days of his life were nine hundred and five years: living twenty-five years less than Adam, as he contracted marriage forty years earlier.

Verses 12-14: Cainan lived seventy years and begot Malaleel. And Cainan lived, after he begot Malaleel, eight hundred and forty years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Kenan lived seventy years and begot Mahalalel. And Kenan lived, after he begot Mahalalel, forty years and eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Kenan were ten years and nine hundred years, and he died.

The Greeks have him living one hundred and seventy years before he begot a son.

This Cainan hastened marriage sixty years before Adam; for at seventy years old he begot a son, after which, surviving eight hundred and forty years, he begot many sons and daughters, and thus all the days of his life were nine hundred and ten years: twenty years less than Adam. Although he married twenty years earlier than his father Enos, he nevertheless lived five years longer: perhaps because he was of a more robust nature and better complexion with more balanced temperament, which greatly contribute to longevity.

Verses 15-17: Malaleel lived sixty-five years and begot Jared. And Malaleel lived, after he begot Jared, eight hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Malaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Mahalalel lived five years and sixty years, and begot Jared. And Mahalalel lived, after he begot Jared, thirty years and eight hundred years, and he died.

The Greeks have: Maleleel lived one hundred and sixty-five years and begot Jared.

This Malaleel knew his wife sixty-five years earlier than Adam; for at sixty-five years old he begot a son, and after his birth, surviving eight hundred and thirty years, he begot many sons and daughters.

And the entire period of his life was eight hundred and ninety-five years: thirty-five years shorter than Adam's period; and although he married only five years earlier than his father, or to put it better, contracted marriage with a woman five years earlier, he nevertheless ended his life fifteen years earlier than his father by natural death.

Verses 18-20: Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years and begot Enoch. And Jared lived, after he begot Enoch, eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Jared lived sixty-two and one hundred years, and begot Hanokh. And Jared lived, after he begot Hanokh, eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Jared were sixty-two years and nine hundred years, and he died.

The Greeks correctly have: Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, etc.

This Jared was a man of great virtue and remarkable continence. For while all others, from Adam up to him, hastened marriages by many years, he not only delayed knowing his wife until Adam's time but surpassed Adam's marriage time by thirty-two years; for he knew his wife and begot a son at one hundred and sixty-two years old. But this praiseworthy continence received its reward, and the greater it was, the greater rewards it obtained. For while all others, from Adam up to him, closed their lives in a shorter period than Adam, he exceeded Adam's life span by thirty-two years, just as he practiced continence for thirty-two years more than Adam before marriage. Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years; he lived for nine hundred and sixty-two; for Adam begot a son at one hundred and thirty years of his life; he, at one hundred and sixty-two; therefore, the more continent he was, the longer his life was. Thus, God always honored virtue with honors, rewards, and gifts, and the greater the virtues, the greater the rewards.

Verses 21-24: Enoch lived sixty-five years and begot Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God, and after he begot Methuselah, he lived three hundred years and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Hebrew Text: And Hanoch lived five and sixty years and begot Mathusalah. And Hanoch walked with God, after he begot Mathusalah, three hundred years and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Hanoch were five and sixty years and three hundred years. And Hanoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him, or God received him.

Chaldean Text: And Hanoch walked בְּדָחַלְתָּא דִּי (in the fear of the Lord), for God did not want him to die.

Jerusalem Targum: And Hanoch served the Lord in truth; and behold, he is not, for he was taken away by the word, or speech, of the Lord.

The Greeks have: And Enoch lived one hundred and sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. Enoch pleased God and was not found, for God translated him.

The Hebrews interpret this passage differently from the Catholic doctors. They say that Enoch, before he begot his son Methuselah, was greatly inclined and enticed by carnal desires. However, after he begot his son, he walked more temperately and followed God in holiness and righteousness. When the holy and blessed God saw this, with His supreme wisdom, He caused Enoch to die before his time to prevent him from being turned away from God and righteousness by the influence and malice of his wife and children, which could corrupt his mind and pervert his understanding. Therefore, it is said that he was not because he died, but that God took him because he died by a special divine decree, as it is said in

Jonah: "Take... my life from me"; and as Elijah also said: "Take, Lord, my life from me, for I am not better than my fathers."

However, our teachers say that Enoch, due to his excellent virtue, was taken by God, like Elijah, translated into an earthly paradise, and lives to this day. Therefore, it is not said in the Sacred Text that he died, but that he was not found, or he was not, because God took him. Hence, it is also said in Ecclesiasticus: "Enoch pleased God and was translated into paradise to give wisdom to the nations."

For my part, it is not entirely clear which opinion I should follow; however, I am far from disapproving of our teachers' opinion, indeed I rather fear to do so; but I will state what I think, leaving everything to the judgment of wiser men. Clearly, I have always considered Enoch to be a most holy and righteous man. Therefore, although all men from Adam to Noah were just and utterly perfect, Enoch is said to have walked with God with a certain preeminent excellence and prerogative of virtue and perfection, that is, to have led a celibate and utterly divine life on earth in complete integrity. Hence, he was wonderfully endowed with divine wisdom more abundantly than others. For he prophesied, as Blessed Jude the Apostle testifies, the seventh from Adam, saying: "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His holy ones to execute judgment upon all and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in such an ungodly manner, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against God." And so, he shone wonderfully with the admirable holiness and innocence of his life, the very clear light of his works, and the transparent splendor of his wisdom.

However, it is not entirely certain, firm, and constant that he is still living, so that it is not permissible for anyone to hold a different opinion; for it does not immediately follow that he was translated alive in the body when it is said: "And he was not, for God took

him." For the phraseology of Sacred Scripture is such in many places that by this manner of speaking a premature death is understood, whereby God receives His saints to Himself. For example, Elijah prayed to the Lord and, asking for his soul to die, said: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." Likewise, Jonah said: "And now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." However, the clearest passage is in Wisdom: "The righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, nor measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for men, and a blameless life is ripe old age. Being pleasing to God, he was loved, and while living among sinners, he was taken up. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul." Shortly thereafter it says: "Because his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore He took him quickly from the midst of wickedness."

These words clearly refer to the premature death of the righteous, by which God is said to transfer and hasten to receive them to Himself. Therefore, when it is said here: "For God took him," it is most certain; but whether in the body or out of the body, it is uncertain.

The notion, however, which is almost universally accepted by our people, both Greeks and Latins, that Enoch was translated, emanated from the Septuagint Translators, who interpreted the Hebrew word לקח, which means "took," by the verb "to translate," and the phrase אֵינּוּ, that is, "he was not," as "he was not found." For they rendered this passage as it is now in the Greek Vulgate Edition: Καὶ οὐχ εὗρίσκατο, ὅτι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός, that is: "He was not found, for God translated him."

However, the Hebrew Truth has: וְאֵינּוּ כִּי־לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים, that is: "And he was not, for God took him."

As for the passage in Ecclesiasticus, not differing from the aforementioned, we understand it thus: "Enoch pleased God," that is, he walked with God; for this is how the Septuagint translated it: "And he was translated," according to the phrase: "Being pleasing to God, he was loved, and while living among sinners, he was taken up." This, however, is understood of death; but the phrase "into paradise," we understand as the bosom of Abraham, in which the souls of the holy Fathers were comforted, as it is said of the beggar Lazarus. Finally, the phrase "that he might give wisdom to the nations" is understood from his good works; for the righteous dead condemn the ungodly living by their good works: just as Abel is said to still cry out, according to the Apostle, which can only be from good works.

Nor are we compelled to understand by paradise the place where the first man was placed; for it is entirely uncertain whether that garden, planted with trees, still exists, and it is more certain that it does not exist than that it does, since, according to the Hebrew Truth, that garden was planted by God in Eden. Now it is known that Eden is inhabited by nations not far from the Promised Land, on the borders of Haran and Chenan. For thus we read in Ezekiel: "Haran, and Canneh, and Eden were your merchants."

Then, as Sacred Scripture testifies, we know that Cain dwelt to the east of Eden, near the location of that paradise, not far from where his father Adam and his brother Seth dwelt; since the sons of Seth, who are called the sons of God, could see the daughters of Cain and take from among them wives, as they chose. The common opinion holds that Adam lived not far from the Promised Land after he was expelled from paradise, and that he was buried in Hebron in the double cave, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were also buried. Near these regions, not even at great distances, some trace of that most renowned paradise is discernible; for the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, which flow from there, are found near those regions.

But we have digressed far too much. These things seemed necessary for us to say on this matter, yet we leave each to his own opinions, and these matters too are to be judged by wiser men.

However, there is a passage in St. Paul which compels us to say that Enoch did not die. For the Apostle says of him: "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." But clearly, this can be understood concerning the flood, so that he would not see the miserable death of men in the flood and perish with them, submerged in those waters; hence it says: "that he should not see death," not "that he should not die."

It can also be understood otherwise, according to that passage in Wisdom: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, but they are in peace." In whatever way it is understood, our point remains intact. The reason why it is not said in the text that he died is that the separation of his soul from his body was divinely done, and his soul was immediately translated to a better life and place of rest and consolation.

Verses 25-27: Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years and begot Lamech. And Methuselah lived, after he begot Lamech, seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Methuselah lived seven and eighty years and one hundred years, and begot Lamech. And Methuselah lived, after he begot Lamech, two and eighty years and seven hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Methuselah were nine and sixty years and nine hundred years, and he died.

Righteous Enoch begot a righteous and most continent son, who greatly surpassed all his fathers before him in the continence of life; for he delayed marriage until the one hundred and eighty-seventh year of his life, leading a celibate and continent life fifty-nine years longer than Adam. However, greater rewards and more abundant gifts were not lacking for his greater virtue: for he led a life period thirty-nine years longer; he died at the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years, the same year that the waters of the flood inundated the whole earth: for he begot his son Lamech in the one hundred and eighty-seventh year of his life, and Lamech begot Noah at the age of one hundred and eighty-two years, at whose six hundredth year of life the flood inundated. If these years are summed together, they make nine hundred and sixty-nine years; this is the period of Methuselah's life. So that he might not see that miserable death of the wicked, and so that this most righteous man might not perish with the impious and most wicked ones in the waters of the flood, God hastened to take him from the midst of the wicked, receiving him to Himself through the death of the righteous.

Verses 28-31: Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years and begot a son, and he called his name Noah, saying: "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed." And Lamech lived, after he begot Noah, five hundred and ninety-five years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

Hebrew Text: And Lamech lived two and eighty years and one hundred years, and begot a son and called his name Noah, saying: "This one will cause us to rest from our work and from the labor, or the pain of our hands, from the ground which God has cursed." And Lamech lived, after he begot Noah, five and ninety years and five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Lamech were seven and seventy years and seven hundred years.

The Greeks have rendered this passage very differently. The Greek text has that Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-eight years before he begot a son; after he begot a son, he lived five hundred and sixty-five years, and all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and fifty-three years. However, the Hebrew Truth and the Chaldean Interpreter have it as it is in our Edition.

From this alteration of years in this genealogy by the Septuagint Translators, certain inconveniences of some significance have followed. For, according to the true computation of years, which is found in these generations as in the Hebrew Truth and our Vulgate Edition, only one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years are enumerated; if they are enumerated according to the Septuagint Translation, there will be two thousand two hundred and forty-two years. To make this clearly evident, it will not be out of place to list here the years of each generation, both according to the Hebrew Truth and our Edition, and according to the Septuagint Translation.

Years from the formation of Adam to the flood,

according to the Hebrew Truth and our Edition		according to the Septuagint Translation	
Adam: years lived and begot	130	Adam: years lived and begot	230
Seth: years lived and begot	105	Seth: years lived and begot	205
Enos: years lived and begot	90	Enos: years lived and begot	190
Cainan: years lived and begot	70	Cainan: years lived and begot	170
Malaleel: years lived and begot	65	Malaleel: years lived and begot	165
Iared: years lived and begot	162	Iared: years lived and begot	162
Enoch: years lived and begot	65	Enoch: years lived and begot	165
Mathusalam: years lived and begot	187	Mathusalam: years lived and begot	167
Lamech: years lived and begot	182	Lamech: years lived and begot	188
Noah lived and the flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah's life	600	Noah lived and the flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah's life	600
Total	1656	Total	2242

In the computation of the years of the world, there are found to be many more according to the Septuagint Translation than according to the Hebrew Truth.

Lamech thus lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and begot a son, Noah the righteous. For he too was a very righteous, upright, and perfect man, with a singular continence of life: indeed, he led a celibate, continent, and incorrupt life fifty-two years longer than Adam. Hence, with a singular merit of virtues and deeds, suffused with heavenly wisdom, inspired by the Holy Spirit and the Divine Spirit, he prophesied when he begot his son, saying:

"This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed." For above, due to the transgression of the first man, it was said by divine decree: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." This holy man alludes to this, saying that this son would comfort them from these labors and pains of work, causing them to rest from the burdens of these labors.

Some refer this prediction of Lamech to the restoration of the world. However, most of the Hebrews say that Noah invented plows, so that animals might plow the earth with them and men might rest from the painful burdens of labor, as they previously cultivated the land only by hand. But how could Lamech know this when the boy was scarcely born? Surely only by revelation. But was the invention of the plow so worthy a matter that it should be revealed by God?

Rabbi Abrabanel explains this passage thus: Since it was said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life until you return to the ground from which you were taken," Adam himself lived for nine hundred and thirty years; therefore, when Lamech, Noah's father, was born, Adam was still alive; for only eight hundred and seventy-four years had passed from the creation of Adam to Lamech's birth. Therefore, since Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years, it is clear that he lived until Lamech's fifty-sixth year. Hence, all those in this genealogy from Adam to Noah were born before Adam's death; Noah alone was born

after his death. Lamech, noticing this, said upon the birth of his son: "If God cursed the ground because of Adam, so that it would bear fruit only if worked and cultivated until his death, certainly since this son is the first to be born after his death, he will comfort us and cause us to rest from these labors."

Therefore, I think these words are to be understood as follows: all the hope of life and all our consolation is placed in this one son; he alone, from all our labors which we have endured in begetting, nurturing, and educating children, and from all our works which we have carried out, will survive. Everything else, due to the curse with which God is about to curse the entire earth, will be destroyed, devastating it and all that is in it with the waters of the flood; he alone will remain and survive: he alone will be saved, and through him the entire human race will be restored. These words, if understood in this way, were certainly worthy of being revealed by God.

After begetting this son, about whom such things were foretold, Lamech survived for five hundred and ninety-five years and died at the age of seven hundred and seventy-seven years. He died five years before the flood and passed away the same number of years before his father Methuselah closed his eyes; for Methuselah died in the year of the flood.

The Hebrews say that Lamech died before his time, with God orchestrating it; for death was more beneficial to him than life, so that he would not witness that final calamity and the miserable destruction and submersion of all men in those most bitter inundating waters of the flood. And perhaps, having received a special revelation of this kind from God, this most pious man beseeched God with inexpressible groans, asking to close his final day before that most severe, yet no less just, plague would arrive.

And he was heard for his reverence and closed his eyes before seeing such a great evil.

Verse 31: Noah, when he was five hundred years old, begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Hebrew Text: And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Noah, the tenth from Adam, was born a man of integrity and perfection, just as the number ten is most perfect. He was indeed a man of great and admirable virtue, continence, and humility; for behold, until his five hundredth year, he remained a humble son in his father's house, obedient and subject to his father: "Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot [sons]." Observe the admirable virtue and excellence of his continence, by which he far surpassed all his ancestors. For all those who preceded him in age married women around the hundredth year, more or less, all before the two hundredth year; but he deferred until his five hundredth year, leading a celibate and heavenly life among men, and those indeed most wicked and depraved, in the most holy manner.

Nor do I think he took a wife except by God's command, with God already revealing to him that through him He would save the human race. For when God saw the wickedness, He said: "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." Then He commanded Noah to build an ark. At that time, still unmarried, he led a life ignorant of the corruption of the flesh, and I believe he was then commanded by God to take a wife to procreate children, through whom the human race would be spread far and wide; nor did he ever wish to marry before God's command.

For he knew that if he had married around the hundredth year, many years would have intervened until the flood; thus he could have

begotten children and seen the children of his children to the third and fourth generation; among whom there would have been many strong and fortunate, impious and wicked ones, like the men of that generation, who were unworthy of being saved from the inundating waters of the flood. But if they were to perish: why should I, he said, beget children who are to perish by such a miserable death before my eyes? Then, if he had begotten at the usual time of his preceding fathers, he would undoubtedly have begotten many sons and daughters, nor could such a multitude have been preserved during the time the flood lasted without great loss along with so many species of animals. Therefore, it was provided and arranged by God's providence that Noah should defer marriage until his five hundredth year.

In that same year, he is said to have begotten three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Perhaps these sons were not born in the order in which they are placed in Sacred History. For if Shem was the firstborn, he should have been a centenarian at the time of the flood: indeed, the flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah, but he begot children in the five hundredth year of his life. Yet, when he begot his son Arphaxad, he was a centenarian, two years after the flood. Therefore, he was not born in the five hundredth year of Noah's life, but two years later. But since Scripture says that Noah begot children at the age of five hundred, it is clear that someone older than he existed and that he was not the firstborn.

Some of the Hebrews, however, say that he is placed first because he was born circumcised, without a foreskin. But that is a fiction. We say, therefore, that he obtained the first place in Sacred Scripture because of his outstanding virtue and excellence of merit. For he was Melchizedek, king of Salem..., priest of the Most High God; from him, the most holy patriarchs drew their origin; from him, the chosen people, and finally Jesus Christ, the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, was to be born. This is not unlike what

happened with the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim; for the younger Ephraim is preferred over the elder and endowed with the birthright, because he was to become a greater nation.

It will not be irrelevant, however, to inquire at present why the men of this first generation from Adam to Noah lived so long, just shy of a thousand years. Some entirely disregard giving any explanation for this matter, thinking to themselves that the years mentioned in that genealogy are not solar years, but lunar years. For they say that Moses, who was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, adopted the custom of that people, who ended their year with the lunar cycle, among whom it is reported that certain individuals lived for several millennia. But indeed, the Egyptians used the solar year even before the times of Moses. For the wisest astronomers of Egypt, before the invention of letters, represented the year in their hieroglyphics by a dragon devouring its own tail, depicted in the form of a circle, because

"the year slips by through its own footsteps":

hence the year is called a ring, as it returns into itself; for it revolves with the months running in a cycle and is led back into itself and renewed.

Some have imagined the years of the Arcadians to be three months long in order to reduce the exceedingly long lifespans of those ancient fathers. But certainly, from this as well, many inconveniences follow, which are not entirely avoided. For instance, Jared is said to have lived for nine hundred and sixty-two years. If these are three-month years, it is clear that he would have lived for only two hundred and forty years and six months, which are completed by the revolutions of the sun. Similarly, Methuselah completed nine hundred and sixty-nine years of age, which, if these were three-month years, would make only two hundred and forty-

two solar years and three months. This age, however, is not far from our times.

Many inconveniences also follow from the dreams of those who think this way. Clearly, when it is described that Salah begot Eber, he was thirty years old; if these were three-month years, he would have been only seven solar years and six months old. But nature does not grant man the power to beget before the fourteenth year. Furthermore, when Isaac's conception was announced to Abraham and Sarah, Sarah laughed, saying: "After I have grown old, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" For they were both old, advanced in age, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. But certainly, when Isaac was born a year later, Abraham was one hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety; if these were not common solar years but three-month years, Sarah would have been only twenty-two years and six months old, and Abraham twenty-five. Can people born no older than thirty years be called old and advanced in age? Likewise, when he died in a good old age, full of days, he was one hundred seventy-five years old; if these were three-month years, he would have been only forty-three years and nine months old. Thus, the total days of Abraham's life would have been only forty-four years at most. Truly a remarkable old age! For David says: "The days of our years are seventy years, or if by reason of strength eighty years, yet their span is but toil and trouble." Therefore, Abraham, who is said to have died in a good old age, would not have reached old age unless you also understand David to speak of three-month years; but then the long lives of men would close around twenty years.

Thus, this fiction cannot hold unless we wish to overturn the entire series of Scripture and confuse all times. For since, according to the Hebrew truth, from the creation of the world to the flood, one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years are counted, if these are three-month years, only four hundred and fourteen solar years would

have passed, and so from the beginning of the world to the times of Christ, scarcely a thousand years would have flowed. Therefore, the years enumerated in this genealogy and the following are not to be considered three-month or lunar years, but solar years, which consist of twelve months, fifty-two weeks plus one day, three hundred sixty-five days and a quarter: with the passing of which, the sun returns to the same positions in the stars.

Most others believe, or rather dream, of different years, saying that ten of those years listed in this genealogy make up one of our years. And for this reason, they assert that the Seventy added centuries to the years before generation: for instance, when Adam is said to have lived one hundred and thirty years, they translated it as two hundred and thirty; for one hundred and thirty years of that type constitute only thirteen of our years. However, a man of thirteen years is not fit for begetting; but in the case of Methuselah, who is said to have lived one hundred and eighty-seven years before begetting, they did not add a century because a man of eighteen years is capable of begetting. But Scripture does not recognize this type of year, nor is this opinion to be approved in any way.

Therefore, since those ancient fathers are said to have lived solar or revolving years, it is fitting to inquire why they led such long lives on earth. Some Hebrews, as Rabbi Abrabanel reports, offer two causes for this matter: one natural and the other mystical and divine. They say the natural cause was a good regimen in diet, since they ate simple foods, fruits, and drank plain water, not wine, nor did they eat meat; simpler foods, as doctors say, contribute to a longer life, while more complex foods lead to a shorter life. Secondly, because they practiced abstinence and very modestly exercised intercourse with women: for they all married around the hundredth year; abstinence greatly favors longevity. The mystical and divine reason they attribute to the will of God, who thus arranged and desired them to live so long, both so that the human race would spread more

quickly and so that they could discover, practice, and teach sciences and arts to their descendants.

Some of our people also bring forward several reasons for the proposed matter. However, having laid out the causes of longevity in general, we will answer the proposed question.

The original cause of the longevity of animal life is the best constitution, which arises from the mixture of the four simple bodies together with the proportion and harmonious analogy of their primary qualities, namely, heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The best constitution occurs when the combination and compatibility of the elements are in balance; for no mixture of primary qualities is appropriate without this balance.

I am not speaking universally of primary qualities, both motive, such as heavy and light, and alterative, such as those mentioned above; for it is impossible for these to exist in equal measure. A high degree of cold creates more gravity than the same degree of heat creates lightness; indeed, a lesser degree of cold creates more gravity than a greater degree of heat creates lightness. Therefore, for there to be equality in motive qualities, there must be an excess in alterative qualities, and where there is equality in the latter, there will be an excess in the former. Nor am I speaking of motive qualities.

Although equal weight can exist in these generally, since they can be intensified or diminished without necessarily being present in every part of the mixture—if it were placed in the sphere of fire, it would indeed descend, because water, air, and earth would overpower it, with fire offering no resistance in its entire sphere: and if placed in the air, earth and water would overpower it, because only fire would resist, with air offering no resistance in its sphere: two equal weights would overpower one equal in singular parts and the mixture would descend; similarly, if placed on earth, it would ascend through water, because only earth would resist, with air and fire overpowering,

water offering no resistance in its sphere: however, if placed at the boundary of water and air, it would resist, as the resistances of both would be equal—such a mixture cannot exist in animals; for the soul could not dominate such a mass, nor would that mixture be suitable for vital and animal operations.

I speak, however, of the mixture of primary qualities, which are called alterative; and this mixture can indeed be in balance: if the mixture is unequal, some intensifying or diminishing quality can be introduced, and these qualities, which are indeed capable of intensification and remission, can be brought to balance by action. Indeed, there must be this equality in some part of the animal due to the sense of touch. For if any quality were to exceed in touch, it could not sense all the tangible qualities of all objects; it only senses the exceeding qualities of objects: if something is touched, only the exceeding quality is felt. If the sense of touch does not have this equality, it would not feel the excess. Many assert that this equality of weight is present in human skin, so it can sense all qualities.

It must be noted, however, that in any animal there must be found at least a double constitution: one innate and the other acquired. The innate constitution is the disposition of qualities closest to the form, and it is called the primary constitution; the acquired constitution, on the other hand, preserves the form and makes the matter more suitable for its operations. The primary constitution is colder and drier, while the secondary one is warmer and more humid. When the acquired qualities are combined with the natural innate ones in the best proportion and analogy, an optimal temperament is achieved, as these two constitutions are brought to a certain equilibrium, thereby achieving a balanced temperance; the warm and the cold, the moist and the dry are measured in equal degrees. However, action and reaction between them never cease; even if they are equal in degrees, they are not equal in power; for the warm is always more potent in action than the cold, even if equal to the cold. Indeed, even

if they were measured equally in power, there would still be mutual conflict and reciprocal struggle, though not victory; instead, they would be reduced to a mean; for the warm acts equally upon the cold because the latter is potentially warm: similarly, the cold acts upon the warm; they cannot, however, consume each other but instead create a most temperate mean.

In this balanced quality of temperance lies the health and intact life of the entire animal; for the best temperance is that which is most distant from the extremes of qualities: for corruption rests in the extremes. Yet it is not required that this temperance be achieved in each individual part of the animal; indeed, it cannot be; for many functions of the parts would be impeded if this equality were established: the heart must be very warm, the bones and nerves dry, the brain cold, and the pupil moist; if these were reduced to such equality, their operations and functions would completely perish. But what can be achieved is that the total constitution in all the parts of the animal together, not in each individually, is equal in weight: so that in the animal there is as much warmth as cold, and as much moisture as dryness, although some parts are warmer and others colder.

But in truth, such a balance of temperaments rarely occurs; it is exceedingly rare for it to be perfectly equal. More frequently, these qualities exceed each other, resulting in numerous complexions. Sometimes the balance tilts towards warmth, when the other qualities are equal; at other times, it tilts towards coldness, moisture, or dryness when any one quality exceeds the others, while the rest remain equal. Furthermore, two qualities may exceed at the same time; if warmth and dryness exceed together, a fiery complexion results, which in animals is called choleric; if warmth and moisture exceed, an airy complexion results, known as sanguine; if coldness and moisture exceed, a watery complexion forms, called phlegmatic in animals; and finally, if coldness and dryness exceed, an earthy

complexion arises, known as melancholic in animals. Each of these complexions can be divided into innumerable and almost infinite variations, depending on the greater or lesser excess of one or two qualities over the others, resulting in countless temperaments corresponding to the various forms of species and individuals.

The best of these temperaments is one in which warmth and proportionate moisture prevail more; since warmth and moisture greatly favor life, and when they diminish, life itself necessarily perishes. Therefore, the superior complexion is one in which warmth and moisture dominate, as these qualities are essential for living beings and most suitable for the substance of animals; however, warmth should hold the first place, and moisture the second. Coldness and dryness are the principles of death when they prevail; hence we observe that the elderly, the closer they get to death, become increasingly dry and cold: and in dead bodies, coldness and dryness immediately take over, while all warmth and moisture flee. Cold and dry are therefore the principles of death: hence, the shortest lifespan occurs when these qualities dominate; warmth and moisture, however, sustain life. These latter qualities are added to achieve temperance, so that the limbs are not overly loosened and flowed by excessive moisture, or not too quickly consumed by excessive warmth without the resistance of coldness or dryness; when balanced, they naturally lead to a longer life. But since every complexion is founded on opposites, which always resist each other more or less depending on the variety of complexions, it is inevitable that the weaker qualities are gradually overcome, leading to the corruption of life and the closure of its period.

The second cause of longevity, though the most important, is the natural and vital heat, which resembles the nature of fire: not elemental fire, which is destructive, but celestial fire, which is vivifying and thus provides life with its presence to such an extent that, as long as it is in an animal, the animal will always be alive.

When this heat is extinguished, however, it is necessary for life to perish; hence it is correctly said by the Philosopher that death is the extinction of this vivifying heat. To prevent it from being extinguished too quickly, it must be perpetually nourished and sustained with nourishment in the body, just as we observe a lamp's flame being sustained by fuel in the wick and so necessarily that, when the fuel is consumed, the flame immediately vanishes. Thus, indeed, for this heat to last a long time, it must be provided with some nourishment by which it is sustained and preserved. Since it cannot survive even for a moment without nourishment, nature has excellently provided, from the very beginning of generation, the primary and vital moisture which, congenitally united with the natural heat, is established as a seat where it can be perpetually nourished through the mediation of the spirit. However, since this natural moisture continuously feeds the heat like flying food and is always consumed, to prevent it from being completely used up, which could easily happen in a very short time, it must be continuously repaired and replenished at regular intervals through the intake of food and drink.

Therefore, for an animal to live, the following are necessary: natural and vivifying heat; spirit, which provides a seat for the heat; primary and vital moisture; a source of nourishment and alimentary moisture supplied by friendly foods and drinks; just as a lamp's flame requires fuel; for this purpose, an exhalation of vapor from the substance of the oil is provided: since the burning flame is vapor, the oily and moist substance in the lamp is the foundation and sustenance of both the flame and the vapor, nurturing and sustaining both: yet not for long, unless the alimentary moisture of the oil supports it, which is poured into the lamp at regular intervals.

Warmth and moisture are particularly sought for life; however, nature prioritizes moisture: therefore, bodies that have the greatest, though proportionate, moisture at the beginning are very well

disposed to a longer life, as they are so moist that it seems heat lies hidden under such moisture and cannot easily overcome the joined moisture and achieve clear dominance; provided it is not so great as to completely overwhelm and suffocate the heat. On the other hand, those that have very little moisture at the beginning of their existence, so that the heat can immediately dominate and appear superior, have a shorter lifespan.

An example of this can be drawn from fires. Generally, a fire subjected to green wood, which is still very damp, smolders for a long time and lies hidden before it can gain dominance over the combustible material placed upon it. Sometimes it appears almost extinguished and suppressed, but sometimes, after regaining strength, it resists strongly and acts powerfully, shining brightly again and raising flames high as if in a sign of victory. However, this fire lasts longer and is stronger than the one kindled in stubble and straw or other very dry wood, which quickly perishes due to the lack of moisture.

Hence, it often happens that those who have been seriously endangered in infancy and childhood and perpetually afflicted with weakness live very long lives and are seen to be healthy in old age after that moisture, under which the heat seemed oppressed, has been overcome and the heat has gained the upper hand. Again, it sometimes happens that those who seem to languish throughout their lives still live long; this indicates that there is neither enough heat to dominate the moisture powerfully, nor enough moisture to completely extinguish the heat; thus, the heat, being moderate, cannot consume much of the moisture, and consequently, the moisture remains less mixed with external influences, staying purer and more effective in supporting the heat.

However, since there is enough heat to defend itself against the moisture, even if less powerfully, and to consume some of it, even if

very little, for its own sustenance: therefore, the animal remains alive for a longer time, though languishing due to the lack of sufficient and powerful heat, as it does not dominate enough to perform the functions that the animal's natural strength demands. Therefore, moisture balanced with heat, either equally or at least proportionately, is another cause and reason for the longer and more enduring life of an animal.

The third cause is nourishment, or alimentary moisture and nutrition, which follows the preceding. For an animal is destined to remain alive as long as its natural heat does not fail; indeed, warmth is the principle of life, and death is nothing but the extinction of this heat. To prevent it from being extinguished, it must be continually nourished by the original moisture; this primary and vital moisture, having to continually feed the voracious fiery heat and sustain it in the body, would be consumed very easily in a very short time unless it was continuously replenished and repaired; similar to how oil, which nourishes the flame of a lamp, quickly runs out unless it is helped by the addition of oil at regular intervals.

Therefore, the primordial moisture must be repaired and, as it were, restored through the intervention of nourishing and alimentary moisture; and thus the intake of food and drink is indeed necessary for life, so that the selected moisture from the food, purified from waste by natural forces and many digestions, repairs and maintains the primordial moisture: and the dry substance of the food, once dissolved and consumed, restores the dry matter of the flesh; for heat devours not only moisture but also the flesh, in which there is a large amount of dry matter. Therefore, food, which should be primarily hot and dry, and drink, which should be cold and moist, are necessary for the animal.

Since the primordial and vital moisture is not that aqueous humor by which the similar parts of the body adhere to each other and consist in solidity, nor is it in any way of an aqueous nature, but rather of an airy nature; for it is considered a kind of airy or ethereal moisture, unctuous and oily, very similar to oil. However, it is not the fat with which we see many parts smeared; for that fat, having been converted into the substance of similar parts, eludes all visual perception, and is scattered throughout the whole body and all its parts, just as heat is present in every part of the body; hence, nourishment or nutrition must be diffused throughout the whole body through the veins and arteries.

Since, therefore, the vital moisture is of such a nature, the nourishing moisture by which it is restored and repaired must be somewhat similar; thus, it should not be purely aqueous, but fatty, sweet, and somewhat viscous. Hence, simple drink alone cannot suffice for the repair of the primordial moisture: for sufficient fatness cannot be extracted from it alone: but the digestion of food and the mixture made from the more solid substance of the food adds to that moisture a binding element of its own nature, as if a viscous fat; and the more the repaired moisture from the food is enriched with fat, the better and more durable it will be; yet always more imperfect than what has already been lost and consumed: this indeed more, that less, according to the virtue of the food. For the more perfect the food is, the more it contributes to the restoration of the moisture; and the more it lacks in virtue, the less sufficient it is for the repair of the lost moisture.

However, even if the food were most perfect, it could never restore the lost moisture equally perfect and comparable to that which is lost from their nourishment; for food and nourishment, being dissimilar and contrary at the beginning of nutrition and of adverse quality, necessarily weakens the animal's strength in this action, since every agent suffers in acting. Therefore, the animal's strength is more and

more debilitated each day, and the virtue of the innate moisture is diminished; for if its strength were equally restored, man would neither age nor die: but since from the beginning of the action of heat upon it, it is continuously diminished, it is necessary for it to eventually fail, since it does not have an equally perfect restoration.

Indeed, the nourishing moisture is always, even if of a similar kind, of a foreign nature: but the primordial moisture converts it into its own nature; just as wine converts a small amount of infused water into its own nature, without immediately losing the first virtue of the wine, but still being able to convert the infused water into its own substance; yet the more water you infuse, the more the wine becomes of weaker virtue and perhaps less able to convert the foreign and extraneous substance into itself; if water is infused for a long time, the virtue of the wine is eventually so diminished that it is completely overcome by the water and is entirely defeated by it. Thus, the primordial moisture is lost, and the animal cannot perpetually sustain life, as it will reach a point where it loses the necessary moisture.

For this reason, excessive gluttony and insatiable voracity do not prolong life. Through it, an excessive mixture of extraneous matter with the primordial and vital moisture occurs, and its heat virtue is then diminished and, as it were, overwhelmed and extinguished by the excessive and surpassing infusion. Although this at first seems to pertain to the detriment of individual substances, it nevertheless, through them, results in the harm of the species and is a detriment to both. For since generation takes place through individuals, the weakness of generation clearly follows their weakness: indeed, all other things being equal, we see that those who are stronger and of better complexion produce stronger and more durable offspring, while those who are weak and frail do not.

Excessive indulgence and unregulated sexual intercourse also bring significant disadvantages to a longer life. Many indeed exhaust themselves with excessive sexual activity; for that obscene excess and the excessive emission of semen quickly prepare the way to death, as it greatly depletes, dries out, and consumes the primordial and vital moisture. Hence, we observe that animals with strong sexual desire and those that produce a lot of semen, which engage heavily in sexual activity, are consumed by death more quickly; Aristotle provided a paradigm of this regarding male sparrows, which live shorter lives than females because they follow excessive sexual activity.

Although this seems to pertain to the individual, as it uses sex for its own purposes, it undoubtedly results in harm to the species. For one who indulges excessively in sexual activity and more frequently than nature and reason dictate can only produce weak offspring, as the semen cannot be of such great perfection and virtue as it would be if he were more moderate in this matter. For since semen is manifold and filled with great strength and perfection by nature, a short period is not sufficient for it to attain its full perfection and complete virtue to effectively perform its duties and operations. Therefore, excessively frequent intercourse for vain pleasure and obscene delights, not called into use according to the order of nature for the conservation of the species, causes the semen, through which generation is preserved, to be less potent in virtue for the repair of the species than it would be if it were administered soberly and sparingly according to the institution of nature.

This results in the greatest disadvantage and detriment to the species, especially because this vice has caused men to contract untimely and premature marriages before their due maturity and natural perfection sufficient and potent for strong generation. Indeed, in this miserable time of ours, we see boys and girls being united in marriage, engaging in embraces, and intending generation,

whose combined years would scarcely reach adulthood; thus, it has rightfully become a proverb that boys generate boys. But how can it be that the human race is not greatly weakened by this practice? Just as an immature grain or seed not perfected by due maturity cannot produce a suitable, strong, and long-lasting fruit; it seems clear that the same must be said of humans: those who engage in generation before the time of their own perfection and consummate virtue in strength cannot effectively strive for the conservation of their species; for each thing is capable of generating strongly when it has attained its proper perfection and all the virtue appropriate to its substance in its species.

How, then, can those who are still far from the end of their perfection successfully generate offspring? And although it is true that men, upon reaching the age of fourteen, and women, around twelve or so, are generally sufficient for generation, it is evident that they cannot possess as perfect a generative power as they will after they have grown into full strength. For as long as nature and vegetative power are greatly focused on the growth of the individual, they are not greatly concerned with perfecting the seed for generation; but once the individual has been raised to the appropriate quantity of nature through growth, then it more freely focuses on the multiplication of the species and then produces seed, which is resolved from the surplus nourishment, more potent for generating its like. Indeed, since the complexion, upon which the longevity of life greatly depends, also depends mainly on the good and optimal conjunction of the seeds of both male and female, the perfection or imperfection of these seeds greatly influences and determines the complexion of the offspring.

However, even if this conjunction were always optimal as far as nature allows, it would still be necessary to find some defect in the ages, with the latter always being deficient compared to the former. For just as nutrition is ordered by nature to restore the individual, so

generation is ordered to repair the species; and just as nutrition cannot preserve the individual perpetually and immortally without corruption, but must eventually fail, since the primordial moisture is not equally adequately repaired through nutrition to the perfection of what is consumed, and thus the fuel of vital heat and vigor continually diminishes — for which reason it is necessary for the matter to eventually come to destruction, with the vital heat and its fuel completely failing; — so clearly generation, which does not sufficiently repair the strength of the species to propagate an equally strong and vigorous species as it was in the beginning, and the more the species of an animal is propagated through generations, the more the primary virtue of the complexion that was in the original individuals continuously weakens: thus the virtue of the human complexion gradually weakens day by day. For the species itself depends on propagation: this, however, on generation: generation, indeed, on seed: and finally, seed on the primordial moisture, which is always more and more weakened day by day and in each generation its virtue is more feeble and weaker. Therefore, since its virtue is continuously weakened and not adequately restored, it is necessary that generations continuously weaken and become less vigorous day by day, and the virtue of the species becomes ever more feeble and infirm.

And indeed, this is found to be true not only in humans but undoubtedly also in animals, plants, herbs, trees, and their fruits for the same reason. This natural reason itself demonstrates to us that the species of all living things cannot perpetually stand and be eternal: but eventually, they must necessarily fail and cease. Since the virtue of the species is finite; and since its virtue diminishes with each generation, it must eventually be consumed: for the finite must necessarily be consumed by the removal of finite parts.

There is also another cause of the length of life, namely the celestial influence of the sun and other planets and stars. For these have

power over the elements and compounds: in the elements, for example, when the sun generates fire with its rays without any flame, and by heating water, resolves it into vapor and air; then it also mixes the elements, unites them, and applies them to conflict, so that they later produce effects by themselves: for the sun attracts exhalations from the earth, vapors from the water into fire and air, which, when combined, change themselves.

They are also the cause of compounds, both because they gather elements for mixing and infuse a productive virtue beyond the form's capacity. For the production of the form of the compound is not from the elements, but from the virtue of the heavens: it is induced, however, not without the forces and virtues of the elements. Then they are also the cause of living beings, both because they gather elements and infuse the productive virtue of the form; or if they do not imprint the entire virtue overall, they at least assist another virtue, such as that of the seed, and consolidate the natural heat.

Indeed, that heat is not elementary but celestial, from the celestial, I say, virtue, not of the elements. Since this heat is the principle of life and the celestial virtue of the stars imparts it, it clearly shows that the heavens and the stars by their influences are the cause of the length of life; for since they are the cause of the existence of a thing, they are equally the cause of life and duration.

Finally, the duration of any life depends on the most free divine will; hence Blessed Job says: "Man's days are short; the number of his months is with you; you have set his bounds that he cannot pass."

Given these points, it is now time to answer the question posed. We say, therefore, that those primeval fathers prolonged their lives on earth to a great extent because all the reasons for living, which have just been mentioned, were most significant and suitable for a longer life in them. For if we look at the first reason, they had the best and

strongest complexions. The first parents of the human race, created by God, formed by the hand of God, possessed the most perfect complexion and the best temperament. For God's works are perfect, and especially so because He created them with the intention that they would live an immortal life perpetually, not tasting death on earth. To this end, the tree of life was forbidden to them by God, which by its nature was born to strengthen and fortify the virtue of the species and to repair the primordial moisture lost through the action of heat, so that man would have obtained immortality by the benefit of that tree. For thus we read: "Now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." After sin, however, without the benefit of that tree, because of the strength of their complexion and vigor, they lived for nine hundred and thirty years; the virtue of that primary complexion in those primeval men, even if slightly weakened, lasted very well.

Furthermore, the second reason for living was very perfect in them. For when God created man to live perpetually, He undoubtedly endowed him with the most perfect and vivacious vital heat and the most abundant primordial moisture, proportionate to the heat: for the proportion of these provides the leadership for longer life, these things make life. And since the virtue of both the complexion and these qualities is transferred through generation to the offspring, the stronger the generation, the more it ensures the virtue of the species is perfectly preserved, making their virtues stronger and more potent. However, in the age of maturity, generation is strongest; for then the vegetative power, having acquired the proper perfection for the individual, becomes more concerned with the conservation of the species, nature attends to perfecting the seed for generation and makes the seed then more potent and filled with greater virtue to generate its likeness. Those primeval men, however, did not focus on generation until they had grown into full strength: for none is recorded to have begotten children before the sixtieth year before the

flood, but some delayed generation up to the hundred and eighty-seventh year.

Therefore, since the first parents were endowed with the most perfect primordial and vital moisture and heat, they also transmitted the species' virtue, scarcely or not at all weakened, to their children through generation. Moreover, the other men of that age, who are recorded to have been perfectly generated, also did not engage in procreation before reaching due maturity and natural perfection sufficient for strong generation. Thus, the species' virtue, then most perfect and perfectly propagated through strong generation, persisted longer in individuals due to the perfection of the primordial moisture and vital heat, which were scarcely weakened from their original state.

The third reason also contributed greatly to a longer life. Indeed, the more perfect the virtue of alimentary and nutritive moisture is, the more perfectly the primordial moisture is restored. And at that time, the produce of the earth, which humans consumed, was undoubtedly of much better and more perfect virtue than it is now, partly because the productive virtue of the earth was greatly weakened by the flood's waters due to their salinity: "For the fountains of the great deep, which is the ocean, the greatest of all, were broken up"; and salinity greatly hinders the earth's productivity. Therefore, after the flood, God granted Noah's sons the consumption of meat, in addition to herbs and the fruits and seeds of trees.

Moreover, the virtue of human food decreases through many generations, since the generation of food also does not perfectly and precisely restore the species' virtue, but the virtue continuously diminishes: just as their primordial moisture is not fully restored through alimentary means, otherwise, they would never be corrupted unless by external factors; and the weakening of these indeed results in harm to humans, since humans use them for food and

nourishment. The more this food lacks in virtue, the less it suffices for the restoration of the human body and becomes increasingly unsuitable. Since the food and nourishment of humans at that time were of much more perfect and effective virtue, they undoubtedly contributed more to a longer life and were more suitable for restoring the body.

Furthermore, those men did not excessively indulge in gluttony but lived frugally, using appropriate and moderate food for sustenance and employing simple foods in their diet, which, as physicians say, are more conducive to preserving life than more complex ones. They certainly used the fruits of the earth, and indeed the best of them, for food, as Adam, through infused or innate knowledge of all the virtues of herbs and fruits of the earth conducive to life, recognized and introduced them into use for the posterity of that age. For drink, they had water, not wine; and moderation and sober simplicity in diet greatly contribute to a longer life, as they mix less extraneous moisture with the primordial one; for excessive nutritive moisture greatly weakens and debilitates the virtue of the primordial moisture, being of a foreign nature.

Moreover, those primeval men led very temperate lives; up to about the hundredth year, more or less, they led a continent and incorrupt life; afterward, when they entered into marriage, they did so not for vain pleasure and obscene venereal delights but soberly and sparingly engaged in intercourse according to the order of nature, administering it for the conservation of the species, to beget sons and daughters. Continence indeed greatly contributes to the length of life, just as excessive sexual activity greatly harms and brings significant detriment, as we observe that lascivious and highly seminal animals, which indulge greatly in sexual activity, are consumed by life more quickly. For that obscene excess and excessive emission of semen greatly dry out the primordial moisture, and when it is deficient, it is necessary for the animal to depart from

life; chastity and continence, however, contribute greatly to the length of life. Hence, as noted above in the exposition, after Adam, all who hastened into marriage were also consumed by life more quickly; while those who led a longer continent and chaste life enjoyed a longer period of life: as was the case with Jared, who lived thirty-two years longer than Adam because he led a continent life for that much longer; similarly, Methuselah lived thirty-nine years longer than the first parent because he led a chaste life for many more years than Adam.

The favorable aspect of the stars also greatly aided them in living longer lives. Indeed, those primeval men were inhabitants of the eastern region of the world, where, since it is the right side of the world, the aspect of the stars is best. Hence the wind ἀπὸ ἡλίου, called "subsolanus" in Latin, rising in the east under the rays of the sun, greatly favors and nourishes life as it blows; and as we have said above, the period of life depends considerably on the aspect and virtue of the stars.

Finally, we attribute the disposition for such a long life to divine arrangement, by which all things are sweetly and pleasantly disposed in order, weight, and measure; which ordained that the men of that time should live such long lives so that the human race could better grow and spread: and that men might acquire experience in things, discover arts conducive and proper to life, seek the causes of things, and investigate the sciences through the contemplation of things. Therefore, by the will and power of God, they persisted in life for such a long time.

I do not mean to say that they lived by a miracle, that is, beyond the powers of nature, or that God willed them to live by His omnipotent power, outside the function and works of nature; for this would be false: since the soul exercised its functions and works in the body; but just as the multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt is

attributed to the omnipotent power of God, as He Himself said: "I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea," which nature could not have accomplished so quickly, unless aided and supported by the special virtue of God, so that they grew into such a multitude and spread into so many generations from one root; so too we say that those primeval men prolonged that long period of life, with God providing nature with the virtue so that they would not fail sooner; yet their life is to be considered natural, not beyond nature, just as the generation of the Hebrews was natural.

Chapter Six

Verses 1-2: And when men began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose.

Hebrew Text: And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them; and the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose.

Chaldean Interpreter: And it came to pass, when the sons of men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of the princes saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful, etc.

Greek Text: And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw the daughters of men, etc.

There was an interpretation of this passage by some Hebrews in the Gemara, who understood the sons of God to be angels who adhered to women as incubi, and from these unions were born giants. But if the angels sinned, they, not men, should have paid the penalties for such great crimes. However, Sacred Scripture relates that it was the crimes of men, not angels, that were the cause of the flood: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth." Rabbi Abrabanel says that this interpretation is mystical and secret.

Others understand the sons of God to be noble judges and leaders of the people, who, seeing the beautiful and adorned daughters of common men and their subjects, captivated by their beauty, took

them as wives by force, against the will of their parents, and dragged them from their homes. But if all these crimes were committed by the judges and the powerful, why did not they alone perish in the punishment of their crimes by the waters of the flood, but all men universally were submerged and perished?

Others have interpreted the sons of God to be understood as those distinguished men, just and virtuous, who appeared to be almost divine due to their exceptionally long lives and the brilliance of all their virtues that shone forth from their extended lifespans; these are the ones who have remained until now. However, their sons did not emulate the justice of their fathers, but instead, deviating from their parents' justice and piety into all kinds of injustice and impiety, were the cause of the miserable disaster of the flood. But if these sinned, they alone should have been punished.

Others understand the sons of God to be the descendants of Seth and Enos, who, because of their devotion to God, were called the sons of God; for indeed, in the time of Enos, the name of God began to be invoked. These, emulating the piety and religion of their fathers, worshiped God; but the descendants of Cain, reflecting their father's impiety, had completely turned away from God. But when even the sons of God turned away from justice and piety to commit evil, since all had turned aside and had become worthless, and there was not one who did good, God, seeing this and being grieved in his heart, said, "I will destroy man whom I have created." This position clearly pleases. However, we do not understand all the descendants of Seth universally, but rather the good and just who carried out God's will and followed his commands, whom God loved as sons.

Therefore, we explain this passage in this way without any reluctance. And when men began to multiply on the earth. The common name of the species is man, encompassing both sexes: hence in Hebrew it is written: "And when אָדָם began to multiply,"

according to what was said above: "And he called their name Adam." Therefore, when the human race had greatly multiplied and had spread far and wide through continual generations, there were still among men many just and God-fearing individuals, recognizing and loving God, who did what was just and right before God and showed examples of light to their neighbors. Nevertheless, the number of foolish and impious people was much greater and almost infinite, who neither feared God nor respected man: unjust, impious, wicked, criminal men, without affection, without peace: men who loved themselves and pursued all kinds of most obscene fleshly pleasures with all their might.

Those men were therefore just and pious; these were unjust and impious. The former were led by the spirit of God and were spiritual; the latter, led astray and enticed by lusts, were entirely carnal. The former were sons of God, which is the state of the righteous; the latter were sons of the devil and desired to fulfill the works of their father. The latter bore vain, shameless, wanton, and most impudent daughters, who walked with an impudent face and a haughty neck, walked with a composed step and with eye gestures, and strutted with curled and twisted hair, in luxuriously adorned garments and breastbands, in necklaces, bracelets, mitres, and hairbands, in perfumes, earrings, rings, and gems, enticing the eyes of men and drawing them to desire, luxury, and wantonness, and they became a snare and trap for the righteous. Behold, it is said: The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose.

Just as Eve, when she saw that the forbidden tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes and desirable to make one wise, took and ate; so these, seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took them as wives, not out of a desire to procreate children with them, but defeated by lust for pleasure and intemperance. These are the ones who turned God's grace into luxury; indeed, the beauty of

appearance and the subsequent lust led them to the destruction of intemperance and debauchery. The sight provided the occasion; by seeing, they were seized by strong desire; not putting a brake on or wanting to restrain their disordered lust, they were submerged under the waves of the most obscene crimes. At first, they gazed with a simple look; but that simple look was the cause of their downfall, for, captivated by the spectacle of beauty, they later looked upon them with desire; and having conceived lust in their hearts, they then, excessively indulging their disordered desires and profusely loosening the reins, used them in intercourse, not by the law of marriage or for the sake of procreating children, but to satisfy their lustful desires.

Therefore, when they had fallen in love with foreign women who were strangers to the religion of God and were united with them in the most ardent love, these women excessively enticing their minds, equally turned their hearts away from God and justice, from all piety and religion, so that they no longer thought about the things of God, how to please God, but about the things of the flesh, how to please their wives. Therefore, having turned away from justice and piety because of these women into all obscene sin, impious and unjust works, those few who still maintained justice among those very wicked men fell, without any hope of repair or salvation—impossible indeed, as the Apostle says, for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away, to be renewed again to repentance—God decided to destroy men from the earth and to cleanse the world of so many great impurities with the waters of the flood. Whence it follows:

Verse 3: And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always remain in man forever, for he is flesh; his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.

Hebrew Text: And the Lord said, My spirit shall not judge in man forever, for he is also flesh; his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.

The soul of man is called the spirit of God in the book of Job: "As long as my breath is in me and the spirit of God is in my nostrils."

Chaldean Paraphrast: And the Lord said, This evil generation shall not remain in my sight forever, because they are flesh and their works are evil; they will be given a period of one hundred and twenty years, if perhaps they might convert or repent.

Jerusalem Targum renders this place in a paraphrastic manner: And the word of the Lord said, The generations that stand to arise henceforth after the generation or age of the flood shall not be judged to perish, to be destroyed, and struck with extermination. Did I not give my spirit in men, for they are flesh? And their works are both good works and evil works. Behold, I have given them a space of one hundred and twenty years, if perhaps they may repent, or not repent.

The Greek text agrees with ours.

Various interpreters, both ours and the Hebrews, have explained this passage. However, there is one ambiguous word in the Hebrew text, from which all the diversity has arisen. For the word יָדֹן can emanate from the root יָדַן and bear either sense: My spirit shall not judge, or strive, or contend with man: for יָדַן means to judge, strive, contend, and argue. It can nevertheless also be derived from יָדָן, which means sheath, and יָדֹן can be put for יָדֹן, where the dagesh is replaced by hannach, as in יָנַח from נָח.

Rabbi Solomon explains the place according to the first meaning of the word: "My spirit shall not strive or tumultuate within me forever because of man, lest I destroy him, or have mercy on him." Rabbi Joseph Kimchi: "My superior spirit, which I breathed into man, shall

not strive or contend forever with the body, which follows animal and beastly pleasures that the spirit does not follow." Others interpret it differently, whose individual expositions are not necessary to recount.

We therefore interpret this passage as follows: "My spirit shall not remain," according to the second meaning of the word: "shall not be sheathed." By spirit, we understand the rational soul that God breathed into the formed man... and man became a living soul. It is called "My spirit" because of special creation: not all souls were created at the beginning, nor do they emanate from the first soul through transmission, as all human bodies are derived from the first human body through generation. But when a human body is generated in the womb of a mother from the seed of a man and a woman and is organized in a fitting manner, the soul is created and infused by God, without any intermediary, and man becomes a living soul, and the body is like the sheath of the human spirit, which is contained in it like a sword in its sheath. Our Interpreter, however, has expressed this more fittingly in a paraphrastic manner, saying: "My spirit shall not remain in man." This man must be understood as in the passage: "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." "Forever," he says, that is, for a very long time, just as until now men lived for almost a thousand years. "For he is flesh," that is, because they abuse that heavenly spirit which I breathed into them, and, as if surrounded by flesh alone and lacking a soul, they consume their lives, entirely devoting themselves to carnal works. For they are carnal men, knowing nothing of the things of God, whereas I created the rational soul to know and understand me, the highest good; to love and supremely cherish me by understanding; to possess me by loving, so that they might eventually enjoy me. But they, neither recognizing nor willing to recognize me or any of my things, but rather blaspheming, corrupt

themselves like brute animals in these things that they know. For they live like beasts, driven and led by carnal desires and senses. Therefore, as they abuse that heavenly spirit to such a great extent that they seem to have received the rational soul in vain, content only with their brutish nature and always occupied and devoted to its works, "my spirit shall not remain in man forever."

However, because their salvation is not yet completely hopeless—for they are men and can still repent as they should—so that, abandoning impiety and their evil ways, they may turn to me and do judgment and justice and not perish, their days shall be one hundred and twenty years, in which they can, if they wish, repent of their sins. They can, for they have reason, by which they can discern what good things are to be done and what evil things are not to be done; and they have will, by which they can mourn their committed sins and resolve not to commit them again. For my spirit, which is in them, still sits as a judge within them, capable of judging what is right in the tribunal of conscience; still, that spark of conscience, συντήρησις, contends and fights against evil, always desiring to keep itself immune and untainted by sin, and can never be extinguished, always murmuring against evil; for violators and ravishers of souls, the demons, cannot corrupt this spark. Hence the struggle, tearing apart and tormenting, beyond what can be imagined, the unhappy and miserable sinful soul, like a most bitter worm, which always pricks with a most piercing sting, bites and gnaws continually and never dies. For that natural instinct, that spark of reason, that pinnacle of the mind, always abhors and execrates evil, and always συντήρησις drives towards the love of God and good; however, the reprobate will, corrupted and depraved by evil pleasures, resists with all the force of its hatred. It is up to their deliberation if they wish to turn from evil and do good while repenting of their sins; I grant them a period of one hundred and

twenty years, and if within that time they do not repent of their evils, they shall perish in the flood.

Verse 4: There were giants on the earth in those days. And afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Hebrew Text: There were giants in the land in those days, and also afterward when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Chaldean Interpreter: The mighty, or the powerful, were on the earth in those days, and also afterward when the sons of the princes came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

The Greeks have: These were the giants from of old, men of renown.

The foolish antiquity believed that giants were men of very great stature and with the feet of dragons, begotten by the angry earth for the destruction of the gods, so that they might wage war against the heavenly beings and overthrow Jupiter from his possession of the sky. However, these are fictions and the undisciplined fables of poets.

When we hear or read about giants, we understand them to be men of towering and great stature, strong and powerful in might, as is said of Og, king of Bashan, who alone remained of the race of giants and whose iron bed was shown in Rabbath of the children of Ammon, having a length of nine cubits and a width of four cubits by the measure of a man's hand. It is also said of Goliath, who was six cubits and a span tall. Similarly, the twelve spies of the tribes reported to Moses and the people about the inhabitants of the land: "The people whom we saw are of great stature; there we saw some

of the offspring of Anak, of the giant race, to whom we seemed like grasshoppers."

Therefore, giants are men of tall and massive bodies, strong and robust in might, but nevertheless born of men. However, the taller and more massive their bodies and the stronger their might, the more depraved and wicked they were in character and spirit: proud, haughty, luxurious, rapacious, wicked, and criminal. Therefore, they were rightly, perhaps allegorically, said by poets to wage war against the gods with serpentine feet. For there was a certain impious race of men who denied God, thus thought to have wanted to drive God out of his heavenly seat; designated with dragon-like feet because they thought nothing straight, and their whole life's progress and course tended downward to the infernal regions. Hence, having mentioned these giants, it immediately follows: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

He explains from whence they arose, saying: "For after the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, these were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown." They arose from men, he says, when the sons of God, that is, those just men and the sons of the just, came in to the daughters of men. These, being tall in stature and strong in might, are called mighty men, renowned and famous from old times, whose fame spread widely in those ages because of their greatness and strength. Or perhaps better, they are called men of renown because, being strong and powerful, they exercised their power over their subjects wickedly, like cruel and savage tyrants. They are called giants, in Hebrew: הנפלים (the Nephilim), whose etymology is said to come from the verb נפל, which means "to fall."

The Hebrews in Bereshit Rabbah, as Rabbi Abrabanel reports, say that they are so called because the sons of God did not take the

daughters of men as wives in public marriage, but in secret; and when these women bore children, their sin became known, and therefore their children were considered illegitimate and thus called by this name.

Rabbi Abrabanel himself offers another reason for this name, that when the sons of God, who were tall and mighty, adhered to the daughters of men of lesser stature, when these conceived by them, they could not carry the fetuses to the ninth month because of their size; therefore, they suffered miscarriages and bore prematurely, and thus the children were called fallen; for נפל means "aborted" in the Hebrew language.

Others think they were so called because, having vast and large bodies, the rest of the men fell in terror of them, just as some terrible nations were called עמים (the Emim), from terrifying. Others believe the giants were so named because they fell from common corpulence and exceeded their fathers in stature and power.

I believe they were called thus because their crimes and impious deeds caused men to fall and be laid low before them by cruel death and immense violence, inflicting death with wicked hands due to their cruelty of spirit. Therefore, they fell into every execrable crime and detestable wickedness, casting themselves headlong into the most wicked and impious deeds. Hence, they were most notorious for their most wicked and evil deeds and immense impieties, as they filled the whole earth with violence, impiety, and cruelty. Whence it follows:

Verses 5-7: Seeing that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth. And, foreseeing the future and grieved in His heart, He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the

earth, from man to beast, to creeping things and to the birds of the heavens; for it repents Me that I have made them."

Hebrew Text: And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil every day; and the Lord repented that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to beast, to creeping things and to the birds of the heavens; for it repents Me that I have made them."

Chaldean Paraphrast: And it became known before the Lord that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the days, and the Lord repented in His word that He had made man on the earth, and He said in His word to confer their furies in His pleasure. And the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to beast, to creeping things and to the birds of the heavens, because it repents Me in My word that I have made them."

The Greek text has: And God considered that He had made man on the earth, or He reconsidered.

Sacred Scripture wonderfully portrays God here with a certain prosopopoeia, showing Him under the guise of men; for what is said here must be understood anthropopathically. "Seeing that the wickedness of man was great on the earth," it says. This means God sees, or something becomes known to Him; for He does not have eyes to see, being spirit and not body. However, everything is manifestly and clearly known and revealed to the divine intellect, even the most hidden things, as if someone with the most piercing eyes were seeing them in the brightest light. Therefore, "God saw the great wickedness of men": by this, it is made known to Him most manifestly, even those things that were hidden in the innermost and inscrutable recesses of their hearts. For He searches hearts and

examines the kidneys of all; not only does He see clearly those things that appear externally, as men do, but He also looks into the innermost parts of the heart. Behold, it says: "And every imagination of the heart," nothing at all is hidden from Him, but everything is clearly visible to Him at all times and in all places.

For He is present everywhere at all times, so that neither hidden places nor the darkness, even the greatest, can conceal or hide anything from Him. Hence David says: "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. And I said: Perhaps the darkness shall cover me, and the night shall be light about me; even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light are alike to You." How clear and powerful is this eye of God, which does not need the light of the sun or the moon, but is itself the most brilliant light, shining most clearly even in the densest darkness, visible to us yet invisibly, illuminating every place with its simple gaze.

Therefore, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth; wickedness, that is, the depravity and injustice of their deeds and affections; great, He says, because the number of sinners was very large; indeed, the entire human race was rushing headlong into evil deeds, the entire nation, which would have been better had it never been born, was sinful, all its sons were wicked and criminal, and scarcely one just man was found. Moreover, their iniquity was great because they were polluted not by just one or two types of sins, but had manifoldly defiled themselves with every kind of sin: a people very greatly burdened with iniquity. And they did not sin merely because they were led by the passion of the flesh and perverse affections, as happens to most, but intentionally, with all their strength and evil intent, each one dedicated himself to wicked

deeds: "And every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil," meaning, as the Greeks have paraphrased, each one thought diligently in his heart about committing evil. And they did not cease from such great sins and wicked deeds and the most depraved and corrupt affections at any time, but daily they progressed from bad to worse: "Every imagination," he says, "of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually," for they did nothing good, nor did they think about it, at all times. When God saw these things, He was most justly indignant; hence it follows:

He regretted that he had made man on the earth. What does it mean: He regretted? Is he a man that he can repent? Behold, Samuel the Prophet says of him: "The triumphator in Israel will not spare and will not be moved by repentance; for he is not a man that he should repent." Yet through another prophet he himself says: "I... am God and I do not change." Blessed Jacob also calls God the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. However, by ἀνθρώπος-πάθος (anthrōpos-pathos) it is to be understood what is said here that God repented and was inwardly touched by the sorrow of the heart; for a man, when he demolishes and destroys something previously done, shows that he repents of the deed now undone. Nevertheless, God suffered no punishment or pain within himself, no harm; for he is by nature impassible. These things are said, however, so that we may understand the gravity and bitterness of sins, "which deserved divine offense as if the guilt had increased to such an extent that even God, who by nature is not moved either by anger, passion, or hatred, seemed to be provoked to anger." Therefore, the repentance of God in making man expresses his divine will, most justly demanding the punishment of sins from man and wishing to erase him from the land of the living; that sorrow of the heart, however, is the wrath and indignation of the divine will, that is, it expresses the divine will wishing to punish man for his sins by the most just judgment of his justice.

Indeed, wrath is the desire for vengeance and the lust for revenge: and this indeed is in God without any passion and disturbance. For the way of the Lord is most just, his will most straight and just, which indeed rewards all good with good rewards even more abundantly than their merits demand, and also wishes that all evil not go unpunished.

Therefore, seeing God so many and such great detestable and execrable evils, crimes, and misdeeds of men, moved by no passion of anger, or hatred, or indignation, by the most just judgment of his will, exacts the vengeance of evils and the most deserved and just punishments for sins; for the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to destroy their memory from the earth. Hence he says:

I will erase man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to animals, from creeping things to the birds of the sky; for it repents me that I have made them. Behold, he says, I have created and made man with my own hand; and although I have placed him clothed in flesh in the region of the earth, in a place of temptation – for flesh is prone to corruption and is a lure – yet I have never forgotten him, never failed to assist him: but continuously visiting him, I have been present with my grace. I made him a little lower than the angels, or, if you prefer, a little lower than God; for I gave him a mind capable of reason and infused the power of the soul into his body: I crowned him with glory and honor, subjecting all things under his feet: I made him ruler over the works of my hands, saying to him that he should dominate the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the beasts and all the earth; I constituted him as another god after me, marked by my image and likeness, so that with all these things and by the duty of nature and the honor of my deity, he would worship me greatly, recognize and understand me with mind and intellect, love me above all things and in all things with the highest affection and a full heart: to the glory and honor of me he should strive with all his might to do good works: so that after these

things I might crown him with the unfading crown of glory of gold, gems, and every precious stone, and mercifully and justly grant him the highest honors and more abundant rewards, gifts, and favors. This indeed was my intention, for this purpose I made and created him; my counsel and purpose are justice, equity, and uprightness unwavering and inflexible.

But man himself, no longer man but earth, entirely earthly, having left me, the supreme good, and turned his back on me, despising my glory and honor, valuing as nothing whatever I prepared for those who worship and love me in faith and charity, moreover making light of me and holding all my goods in contempt, clung to corruptible goods; delighted and amused by these, he cared nothing for the things of God, but only for the things of the flesh and the world, with all virtue despised, justice abandoned, and my commandments transgressed, he chose to live more like brute animals than rationally. Therefore, wholly animalistic, made like unwise beasts, without understanding, he became wholly carnal and flesh, rendering himself unworthy not only of me and my goods which I had prepared for him but also of this very life, so that my celestial spirit, which I breathed into his face at creation, might no longer dwell in man to live a brutal life: for he is flesh.

But indeed, because man's nature is changeable and he could turn from his evil way to me to work righteousness, abandoning impiety, and thus not die, but live, I granted him a time for repentance, contributing one hundred and twenty years to his life, waiting for them to repent, to see if perhaps they would turn from their wicked way. However, during that time, serving more and more iniquity upon iniquity and impurity upon impurity, they added iniquities to iniquities and sins to sins. Wherefore, according to the hardness of their heart and their unrepentant heart, they heaped up for themselves wrath on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, not knowing that my kindness led them to

repentance; but they despised the riches of my goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. What, therefore, needs to be done now, when the matter worsens daily? With my counsel and the purpose of my immutable will regarding justice and the account of the most righteous judgment preserved, it is necessary to change the sentence for which I created man; for although I know how to change the sentence, I do not know how to change the counsel.

And this change of sentence is called repentance in the Sacred Scriptures; and this is: It repents me that I have made them: because I had destined them for eternal life and heavenly glory; now, condemned to eternal death, it is necessary by the most righteous judgment of my justice to deprive them of temporal life as well. But because I had created all the animals for his use, with him destroyed for whom I made them, for what purpose will they live? Therefore, I will destroy them together with him, from man to beast, to creeping thing and to the bird of the sky.

Having stated these things for the exposition of the text, it will be worthwhile for clearer elucidation to inquire in the present matter: whether the will of God is altogether immutable, or whether it can in any way be changed. For there are many things in Sacred Scripture which show the will of God as changeable, as it is said here: It repents me that I have made man; and in 1 Samuel: It repents me, he said, that I have made Saul king. David also said: He repented according to the multitude of his mercy; through Jeremiah, the Lord also said: Do not withhold the word, if perhaps they may hear and everyone turn from his evil way, and it will repent me of the evil that I thought to do to them because of the wickedness of their deeds. The same prophet also said: Now therefore amend your ways and your deeds and listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent of the evil he has pronounced against you; and elsewhere he said: If that nation repents... I will also repent; and many others are like this. Furthermore, since God is of the most free

will and has free choice, which is naturally inclined to opposites, why cannot it be changed, so that what he previously did not will, he wills, or does not will what he previously willed?

We certainly say that there is a will in God and indeed this will is most free, and that God has free will, since he has intellect: for the will follows the intellect, just as the sensitive appetite follows the senses; and just as in any being in which sense is found, appetite is also found: so with intellect, the will is always found in every being, which either seeks what is known by the intellect by desiring what is not possessed or rests in what is possessed by loving and cherishing. Therefore, in God there is will just as there is intellect; and just as his understanding is his being, so also his willing is his being; and just as the primary and per se first object of the divine intellect is the divine essence, in which every other thing participating in the nature of truth most clearly shines always, and in it and through it he understands all things always – hence the knowledge of God is altogether unchangeable and immutable – so too the highest good of the divine will is the same essence as its object and end.

Nor is it moved by any external end or object, but by the good that is its own essence, the will of God is moved. Wherefore, Plato said that the first mover moves itself, precisely in the way that understanding and willing are usually said to be motions. Therefore, since the divine will is not moved by another, as by an end and object, but only by the divine essence, which is the highest good and in which all other good is eminently found and loved: since the divine essence is altogether immutable, the will must also be immutable. For the divine will is not an appetitive or affective power, as it is in us, to seek and desire the good that it does not have; but it rests and delights in the highest good by loving, and love is the first act of the will.

Secondly, we say that this divine will is most free and of free will. For the Apostle says: The Holy Spirit distributes to each one individually as he wills, that is, by the free choice of the will and not by the necessity of obedience. To the Ephesians, he also says: Predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will. I say that it is of most free will and free choice, because he does not love and will whatever he loves and wills out of necessity; for God loves himself and his own essence and also other things besides himself: for he loves all that he has made, and yet most of all the rational creature, man, and the intellectual creature, the angel, and he hates nothing that he has made, but desires to communicate his own goods and himself to all, as far as possible. Just as any natural thing, as far as it is good and perfect, desires to communicate its own good – hence generation is the most natural work of nature – so truly God wills to communicate his own goods to others, as far as possibility allows and as the thing is capable by its own nature of abundantly receiving divine goodness in itself.

Since God wishes to communicate good things to others besides himself, and this loving is indeed willing good things for another, he certainly loves others besides himself; but he loves himself as an end, and others as a means to the end and for the sake of the end, that is, for the sake of his immense goodness; and he necessarily loves himself, that is, his own goodness, which is his essence – just as our will necessarily desires happiness, and just as any other natural power is necessarily directed towards its own and first object, – for God cannot not love himself: however, he is said to love himself freely in so far as he wills to love himself and to will himself; for in this especially the nature of freedom consists, that whatever anyone does, he wills to do and wills to will. But he loves others besides himself indeed, but only for the sake of the end, that is, for the sake of his goodness; for this is the most fully sufficient

object of the divine will and it is most fully satisfied and delighted by it. Therefore, God loves nothing in other things except his own goodness.

Nor does he love anything in them for their own sake: just as one who takes a bitter potion loves nothing in it except the health, which is its end; for there is nothing in it that can be delightful, as if it were a sweet potion: then, not only for the sake of health but also for the sake of its sweetness, he would wish to take it. But since God finds nothing in things except his own goodness, with which he can be delighted, he loves nothing in them except his own goodness.

However, the one who loves the potion, although not for its own sake but for the sake of health, necessarily loves it, willing the end, that is, health – without it, however, he cannot obtain health, – for willing the end, we necessarily will those things which are for the end, since without them we cannot achieve the end; just as a ship is needed for one wishing to cross the sea, and food to preserve life. But it is different if those things which are for the end are not necessary, but the end can certainly exist without them.

Therefore, since God loves all other things besides himself only for the sake of the end, that is, his supreme goodness, and these are not necessary for God to either obtain, augment, or preserve his goodness, for he is a being supremely good and supremely perfect, and nothing of perfection can be added to him; he surely has no need of our goods. Wherefore, it is very clear that he wills and loves and acts freely, not necessarily. For since he is free, he also acts freely, not necessarily: therefore, he is said to do all things according to the counsel of his will.

Thirdly, we say that the divine will itself is necessary and altogether immutable. It is indeed necessary, because the divine essence is necessary, and the will itself in God is the essence; and the act of willing by the divine will is necessary, just as knowing by the

intellect is; for both willing and knowing are not separate from the essence. But knowing indeed has a necessary relationship to the known, not so the act of willing to the willed: because knowing is about things as they are in the knower, but willing is related to the willed as they are in themselves; hence it is said: truth is in the intellect, but goodness is in things. Therefore, since all things other than God, as they are in God, necessarily exist, but as they are in themselves they do not necessarily exist; hence the knowing of God has a necessary relationship to the known, because they are in him: but the act of willing does not, because he loves things as they are in themselves, therefore not out of necessity.

But that the divine will and the act of willing itself are necessary in themselves, but do not have a necessary relationship to the willed things outside themselves, is due not to themselves but to the defect of things. For that God does not necessarily will things other than himself is not due to a defect in the divine will, but to the nature of things, which are such that without them the supreme perfection and perfect goodness of God can exist, nor can they add anything to his power and perfection.

Therefore, since the divine will and the act of willing are altogether necessary, it is also necessary that they are altogether immutable; I say that the will is immutable, but not that it wills immutability. For he who is immutable wills the change of certain things: for he himself, governing the world with perpetual reason and commanding time to proceed from eternity, grants that all things be moved, moves all things, changes times, transfers kingdoms, sometimes afflicts with punishments, sometimes rewards, always remaining stable and immovable, and willing all changes of nature, he himself is neither changed nor can be changed in his will. For then the will is said to be changed, when it begins to will what it previously did not will, or ceases to will what it previously willed and begins to will the opposite.

And indeed this happens only with some prior change, whether of substance, disposition, or cognition. For since the will is directed only towards what is good and fitting for it, one can newly will something good in these ways: either one now recognizes something as good which was previously unknown (for we make plans to know what is good for us); or because something begins to be fitting for us now, such as wearing double clothing when the severe cold bites in winter, which indeed was not good during the heat of summer. And this certainly does not happen without a change in substance, for now one begins to be affected and scorched by the injuries of the cold, whereas previously it was by the heat.

But indeed both the substance and the knowledge and cognition of God are altogether immutable and unchangeable. The substance of God indeed cannot be changed in any way either from non-being to being, or from being to non-being, for he is the purest act. What is changeable is in potentiality, nor can it be pure act; and the substance of God, being most simple and free from all composition, cannot be mixed with any composition. What is changeable can certainly receive an end and composition: but what is most simple cannot be composed with anything. Furthermore, since it is the most perfect being, it cannot be changed either for the better or for the worse, nor can its perfection be diminished or increased.

Furthermore, because it is necessary being and infinite being; for what is necessary being cannot have anything other than what it has: but what is changed can have and be something other than what it was before, and that indeed contingently, since it was not before. Since it is also infinite being, it cannot be changed, because if it is changed, it is composed with the end of the change and that would be part of it: but any part can be exceeded; but that is contrary to the infinite. Finally: whatever is in God is God, and he is whatever he has, because he is most simple. Therefore, if he were to change, he would certainly have the end of the change: and therefore this end of

the change would indeed be God. If therefore he changes recently, a new and recent God begins to exist. Therefore, the substance of God is altogether immutable.

His knowledge is also unchangeable. For the knowledge of God is his substance; and just as his substance is altogether unchangeable, so too is his knowledge. It is not changed according to the variation of creatures because he knows some things can exist that do not, and some things that do exist can cease to exist; for he knows both things and that they are variable and changeable, and he knows their movements and changes thoroughly, by which the whole flow of time is completed, always remaining immutable. For he has known all things that occur or can occur in time within his eternity, which coexists with all time, like an indivisible center of a universal circumference, and as if an eye were elevated so high that it could see the entire river from its source to where it flows into the sea, observing all the waters of the river and every part of it and everything that happens in it, perceiving the whole flow and change without undergoing any change itself. Thus indeed God sees all the flow of time with one simple gaze and all the changes of things that happen in it; and just as that eye would infallibly and immutably see all things without imposing any necessity on what it sees: so too does God.

Therefore, since God is immutable both in substance and knowledge, it is also necessary that his will is altogether immutable. Hence it is rightly read of him in Numbers: "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind;" and in 1 Samuel: "The Triumphator in Israel will not lie nor have regret; for he is not a man, that he should have regret." Therefore, when it is said here that God regretted making man, it is to be understood metaphorically as ἀνθρώπος-πάθος (anthrōpos-pathos), that is, in the manner of humans; and when it is said that: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and: "He regretted it," it is not to be understood that he saw then as if he had newly recognized and regretted from new knowledge: for he had known it from eternity; but that then the merits of men because of their great wickedness demanded that God should destroy them, as if he had seen it then.

He is also said to have repented for another reason: because man was not created with the intention of being destroyed, but rather to be made blessed, if he did good deeds; therefore, that will was not absolute or of simple good pleasure: but conditional upon good works. However, when he destroyed man, he indeed changed that sentence in which he had first created him, because he delivered to perdition and damnation the one whom he had originally created for beatitude.

And to this extent he is said to have repented, insofar as this repentance signifies a change of sentence, not of counsel; for he never changed the counsel of his will, because it was such and had been from eternity, that if man acted justly, he would be blessed: if unjustly, he would be lost; wherefore, since man deserved perdition due to his iniquity, God destroyed and erased him. Behold indeed Noah, because he was just and acted justly,

Verse 8: "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord," as the text says, meaning that he pleased God and, because of his righteousness, deserved to live and to achieve the ultimate end for which God had originally created him, by God's grace and beneficence.

Verses 9-10: "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God, and he begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth."

Hebrew text: "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations. Noah walked with God; and Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth."

Similarly, the Chaldean Paraphrast says: "Noah was an innocent man, perfect in his generations: Noah walked in the fear of the Lord."

Sacred Scripture, in the context of genealogy, detailed the generations of Noah, noting that when he was five hundred years old, he begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Here it brings them again to the forefront, saying: "These are the generations of Noah." This is not without reason; for in the first order of Genesis and the sequence of genealogy from Adam to Noah, the generations of Noah are enumerated, just as those of the other patriarchs. But now, since he alone was saved from the flood along with his sons, his generations are recounted again because he was left as the second stock of human generation and, as it were, a second beginning from which all future men would trace their origin. It also implies that he did not beget more sons and daughters, as all his fathers did, but, content with just those three, was saved with all his sons because of his righteousness.

Noah, it says, was a righteous and perfect man in his generations: righteous meaning a good and excellent man; righteous because he gave to each what was their due, rendering to God what is God's and to men what is men's. For he worshipped God with faith and charity, gave the highest honor and glory to God alone, loved God in all things and above all things with a perfect and excellent heart, with all his mind, soul, and strength; and he loved his neighbor as himself, showing them examples of light, urging them to do good and avoid evil; therefore, he was called a preacher of righteousness. Thus, he was righteous because he gave to each what was their due.

But not only is he called righteous, but also perfect and blameless; because when all flesh had corrupted its way, he did not follow the lust of the flesh but was led by the Spirit of God, disciplined his body, and brought it into subjection, lest after preaching to others, he himself should become disqualified. Thus, despising the flesh, he adhered to the Lord to become one spirit with Him; this is what is meant by: "Noah walked with God," as it is said: "Walk before me and be perfect," and "Follow the Lord your God and fear Him." He walked with God because he strove to please God, feared God, and loved God; and he is all the more worthy of praise and admiration because he alone at that time was found among all men to follow God; this is the meaning of: "In his generations," because all flesh had corrupted its way: he alone, keeping all righteousness, was found perfect and blameless. Therefore, since he was found perfect and righteous among the most wicked men, in a time of wrath he became a means of reconciliation, because he found grace in the eyes of the Lord and was made the survivor of all mankind, becoming, as it were, a second beginning and second progenitor of the human race.

Verses 11-13: "The earth was corrupted before God, and it was filled with iniquity. And when God saw that the earth was corrupted (for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth), He said to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before me; the earth is filled with iniquity because of them, and I will destroy them with the earth."

Hebrew text: "And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is full of violence because of them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

Chaldean Paraphrast: "And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted, for all flesh of man had corrupted its way. And God said

to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, or rapine, because of their evil deeds, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

The Greeks have: "The time of every man has come before me."

The Jerusalem Targum has: "The earth is filled with חִמָּסִין וְגִזְלִין (chamasin v'gozalion), that is, with robbers and plunderers."

"The earth was corrupted before the Lord," or: "God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted," as it is said above: "Seeing that the wickedness of man was great on the earth," because all their depravity, both of mind and heart in thought, and of deeds in action: this is what is meant by the earth being corrupted. By the name of the earth, we do not understand the ground we tread upon, but the people who are on the earth, as we read in the Gospel: "You are the salt of the earth;" for the men of that very wicked generation, corrupted and depraved by all kinds of sins, deserved no higher name: just as it was said to Adam after the sin: "You are dust and to dust you shall return." Sinners indeed are most truly said to go to the earth, because their bodies, taken from the earth, are also turned back into the earth, nor are they ever given a more dignified place; their souls also, although they have a heavenly origin, being weighed down and oppressed by the excessive and grave burden of sins, as soon as they are separated from the body, descend to the underworld, to that land of darkness covered with the shadow of death, the land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death and no order exists, but eternal horror inhabits.

God therefore saw the earth, that is, earthly men, to be corrupted, because all flesh had corrupted its way. By flesh here we also understand man, not brute animals, which are governed by an unerring intelligence directly towards their end, never deviating or erring, but always adhering to the laws of nature, and consistently following the right path to their end. This whole flesh that corrupted

its way is man, of whom it was said above: "My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh." This flesh corrupted its way with the most disgraceful and obscene lust; for they had no regard for the multiplication of the species, nor any consideration for propriety, but found improper unions and ones that nature abhors. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are against nature; and likewise the men, leaving natural relations with women, were inflamed with lust for one another, men committing shameless acts with men. Therefore, God, being moved, said to Noah:

"The end of all flesh has come before me": the wickedness of this evil generation has become known to me from the beginning, and it was justly deserving to be wiped from the earth even then; but because I do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn and live, I graciously and mercifully granted them a time of one hundred and twenty years for repentance, hoping that they might turn from their evil ways and make their ways and deeds good, and I would relent from the evil that I had spoken against this people. However, now this time of repentance has been fulfilled and is completed; adding iniquities upon iniquities, they are fully laden with all wickedness. Behold, the earth is filled with iniquity because of them, that is, because of their evil deeds: for they were already full, but now they are more fully filled with all iniquity, wickedness, fornication, greed, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, rapine, and robbery; they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless: not acknowledging nor understanding my justice. I see that those who do such things deserve death: what then is necessary to be done? I will destroy them with the earth. Therefore you, Noah, a righteous and perfect man, since you have found favor in my eyes, you shall not perish with the wicked.

Verses 14-16: "Make for yourself an ark of polished wood; you will make compartments in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, the width fifty cubits, and the height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark and finish it to a cubit from the top; you shall set the door of the ark on its side; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

Hebrew text: "Make for yourself an ark of pine wood; you will make nests in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, the width fifty cubits, and the height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark and finish it to a cubit from the top; and you shall set the door of the ark in its side; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

Chaldean Paraphrast: "Make for yourself an ark of cedar wood; you will make compartments in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch."

The Jerusalem Targum also has: of קַדְרִינִין (cedrinis) wood, that is, cedar.

The Greeks have: of squared wood.

Further, גֹּפֶר (gofer), which is in the Hebrew text, is a light wood and very suitable for floating on the water's surface, such as pine: hence many think that pine is properly understood by this word. Others, however, consider it cedar, according to the Chaldean Paraphrase. The Talmudists of the Hebrews also say there are four types of cedar, namely:

זָבְרוּשׁ (zabrosh), עֵץ־שֶׁמֶן (etz shemen), קַדְרוֹם (qadrom), אֵרֶז (erez).

Thus it says: "Make for yourself," that is, for your salvation, so that you may be saved from the flood, an ark, like a very large ship; of polished wood, that is, very smooth, such as pine and cedar; you will

make compartments in it, that is, dwellings for the animals to inhabit; and cover it inside and out with pitch, to seal all the cracks and joints so that it neither takes in harmful rain from above nor allows entry to the water from below, as the side joints are not firm enough or tight enough, lest also the wood quickly decay and become brittle from the soaking and corrosion of the water.

Moreover, by גֹּפֶר (gofer) in the Hebrew text, many understand חֶמֶר (chomer), that is, cement, and others זֶפֶת (zephath), that is, pitch.

"And this is how you shall make it." He first designated the efficient cause of the ark and its purpose together with the type of material, when he said: "Make for yourself an ark of polished wood;" now he prescribes the form by which the ark is to be constructed: "The length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, the width fifty cubits, and the height thirty cubits."

Many believe that the cubits used to measure the ark were geometric cubits, specifically the six-cubit kind. However, this is not accurate; otherwise, that ark would not have been sufficient to house all the various species of animals, their multitude, and the vast amount of food required to sustain them for a whole year. Yet, the Hebrews are unaware of such geometric cubits; instead, a cubit for them is measured as the length of a man's forearm, which equals the span of a man's hand: and there is no clear use of that cubit in the Sacred Scripture, but rather the usual or common cubit, which consists of six palms and measures one and a half feet or two. Moreover, I believe that cubits were much larger than they are now, considering that men were of a much taller and larger stature; the cubit being measured according to a man's forearm; as we read in Deuteronomy, the iron bedstead of Og, king of Bashan, was nine cubits long and four cubits wide by the measure of a man's cubit.

Thus, the length of the ark was three hundred common cubits, that is, forearms; its width was fifty cubits, from side to side; and its

height was thirty cubits, from the lowest floor to the roof. The sides of the ark then tapered to the topmost peak of the ark, so that the sides of the ark were only a cubit apart at the top. I find it highly probable that the sides of the ark formed a quadrangle at the top, with one part longer, such that the two sides placed opposite each other, which extended to the sides, were one cubit apart; while those extending lengthwise were six cubits apart; for the whole ark was constructed in that proportion of one cubit to six in length and breadth. This tapering was done to ensure that water did not remain on the roof of the ark for long, allowing it to flow off quickly, and to enable it to stand more firmly against the force of winds and waves: it did not suffer much from the power of the winds.

Noah was also instructed to make a window in the ark for receiving light: "You shall make a window in the ark." This is a synecdoche; for one window could not provide sufficient light for the whole dwelling, which was divided into so many compartments: but several windows are to be understood, though one larger window. Many believe these windows were made of crystal, for in this way they could both provide light and prevent rain and wind from entering.

But he was instructed to place the door of the ark on the side, so that he and the animals could enter and exit: "And you shall put the door of the ark on its side; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

Our edition differs greatly from the Hebrew truth here; for it says: "And you shall put the door of the ark on its side; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

So too does the Chaldean Interpreter have it.

The Septuagint, however, says: "You shall make a door, or gate, on its side; you shall make it with lower, bicameral, and tricameral decks."

Thus, the door was indeed on the side, not below, for it could not be below, since the lower part of the ark was largely submerged in water; when the ark rested in the seventh month on the mountains of Armenia, the waters continued to decrease until the tenth month; in the tenth month, the tops of the mountains were visible. Thus, the sentence should be concluded: "You shall put the door of the ark on its side;" and then the next verse begins: "You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks;" for he is commanded to make the ark divided into three sections, so that it had lower, middle, and upper compartments. Therefore, our interpreter perhaps used the term "tristega," meaning triple-decked; for "tristega" refers to buildings with three stories. Many believe the lowest compartment was single, the middle bicameral, and the upper tricameral, according to the Septuagint Translation.

Verses 17: "Behold, I will bring the waters of a flood upon the earth, and destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish."

Hebrew text: "And I, behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of lives from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall expire."

So too does the Chaldean Interpreter have it.

The flood in Hebrew is called מַבּוּל (mabul), which some derive from בָּלָה (balah), through prothesis of מ, meaning to mix and confuse; others derive its etymology from נָבַל (nabal), which means to flow down, to corrupt, and to wither, because everything flowed away and rotted in the flood, and all living things under heaven were consumed.

Thus, he says: "Behold, I will bring the waters of a flood." I have commanded you, he says, to make an ark, because I, I say, will bring the waters of a flood. For it is not my will to destroy the righteous with the wicked: for I, who judge the whole earth, do not make this judgment to cause the righteous to be like the wicked: but I will destroy the wicked. However, because I have seen you righteous before me, I want to save you from the waters of the flood; and if I had found fifty righteous in the land, I would have spared the whole place: even if I had found forty-five, I would not have destroyed it: indeed, if only forty, I would not have done it; even if I had found thirty, I would not have struck it: even if twenty, I would not have killed them: nor even if I had found ten, would I have destroyed the wicked men: but for the sake of the righteous, I would have saved them too. But because I have seen you alone righteous before me, I will rescue you, but the others I will destroy, and I will kill all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven; everything will expire, because I created them for man's sake: therefore, with man destroyed, for whose sake all these things were made, it follows that they should be destroyed as well.

Verses 18-20: "But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, you and your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of all living creatures of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kind, and of the animals according to their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind, two of every sort shall come to you to keep them alive."

Hebrew text: "And I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, two of every kind you shall bring into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kind, and of

the livestock according to their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind, two of every sort shall come to you to keep them alive."

So too does the Chaldean Interpreter have it.

God from the beginning established a covenant, set a treaty between day and night, set laws for heaven and earth, so that they would always succeed each other in mutual turns: for he placed light, and there was day, and darkness, and there was night; he also set lights for signs and seasons and days and years; the sun for the power of the day, the moon, and the stars for the power of the night. He also set laws for heaven and earth, so that heaven, by its perpetual revolutions, might influence the earth with light and power, making it fruitful, and the earth might produce plants, herbs, seeds, and fruits at appointed times. He also made a covenant between water and land when he commanded the waters to gather into one place and the dry land to appear; for the place that naturally suits water, encircling the earth, is its boundary, just as the heavenly spheres, by their nature, are always higher and superior in position, encircle the lower, and fire encircles air, and air encircles water by its nature; thus, water should everywhere encircle the earth and should, according to the proportion of simple bodies, be ten times greater than the entire earth. But we do not see this; for not everywhere does the water encircle the earth: but many and vast spaces of land are free from water, and even higher in place; hence the Prophet says: "Who founded the earth upon the waters."

Therefore, it is said: "I will establish my covenant with you." The initial purpose of this covenant was for the salvation of Noah and his family, so that they might be saved from the flood. The covenant further entails the preservation of all living creatures by bringing pairs of each into the ark, ensuring the survival of their species. The animals, birds, and creeping things would come to Noah to be kept

alive. This divine instruction ensured that the covenant was not only with Noah but also with all living creatures, securing the continuity of life on earth after the flood.

This was done by the law of God, who established a covenant between the earth and the water, so that the earth would provide sinuous and steep places and chasms for the water within itself: and the waters, condensed more than their simple nature would allow, would remain within those caverns and not cover the land; therefore, Almighty God enclosed them with boundaries by His command and His omnipotent power. Hence, the Prophet says: "You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth;" and again he says: "He gathers the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he puts the deeps in storehouses." Hence, Wisdom also says: "When he gave the sea its boundary, so the waters would not transgress his command;" and again: "Who shut in the sea with doors?" Job also says: "He gave weight to the wind and apportioned the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the thunderbolt." Finally, Jeremiah says: "Who set the sand as the boundary for the sea, an everlasting decree, which it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it." These indeed show that the waters do not now occupy their proper place by their own nature, but by the command of God are enclosed within the caverns of the earth and, as it were, attached to the earth and intertwined with it into a single sphere.

This was initially done for man's sake, so that the earth might occupy the place suitable to its nature, and the other animals, which were made for man's sake, might have a place to live. But when man, for whose sake all these things were made, broke both the covenants of God and the laws of nature, when all flesh corrupted its way upon the earth, God, seeing the great wickedness of man, and that every thought of their hearts was only evil continually, and that

the whole earth was corrupted, as if regretting the covenant He had made between heaven and earth and water, broke that covenant and commanded the waters to return to their place, flowing everywhere to the utter destruction and extermination of mankind.

However, because God saw Noah as a righteous and perfect man on earth, He wanted to save him from the floodwaters and the great cataclysm, and He commanded him to enter the ark until all flesh perished under heaven and the world of the wicked was destroyed; and then He would mercifully reestablish the covenant that was previously broken, because of His righteousness. This is what He says:

"I will establish my covenant with you," or "I will set up my covenant with you." He said, "I have told you that I will bring a flood of waters upon the whole earth to destroy all flesh because of the wicked: therefore, I will break that covenant because of the wicked, which I initially set between the waters and the earth, when I commanded the waters to gather into one place and the dry land to appear, because now the waters will flood with a great deluge and the greatest cataclysm, so that the waters prevail fifteen cubits above all the mountains under the whole heaven: but this covenant broken because of the wicked, I will again establish with you, that is, because of you. Meanwhile, until this world of the wicked perishes by the flood, enter the ark, you and your sons: for your sake and theirs, even though they may not be as righteous, I want to save them; and not only them but also your wife and your sons' wives: for I want to leave some seed and root for the establishment of posterity: not only of humans but also for the sake of humans some animals, livestock, birds, and creeping things. Therefore, you shall bring pairs of every kind into the ark; pairs, that is, male and female, for future generations. And to ensure that you can live during the time this cataclysm endures, you shall take provisions with you."

Thus, God showed mercy to Noah, recognizing his righteousness and sparing him and his family from the impending destruction, ensuring the continuity of life after the flood.

Verses 21-22: "You shall take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and you shall store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Hebrew text: "And you, take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall be food for you and for them." So Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

So too does the Chaldean Interpreter: "You shall take provisions," he says, "that are suitable for eating by both humans and animals." And Noah did according to all that God commanded him, leaving nothing undone.

His obedience is highly commended; for all the commands given to him, he executed everything; he did not do some things while leaving others undone: but he completed everything in the best manner and just as God commanded him, so he did; not according to his own understanding, but according to the divine will, he carried out all things.

Chapter Seven

Verses 1-3: And the Lord said to him, "Enter the ark, you and all your household; for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Of all clean animals, take seven pairs, male and female... Also of the birds of the sky, seven pairs, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

Hebrew Text: And the Lord said to Noah, "Come, you and all your household, into the ark, for I have seen you righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean animal, you shall take seven pairs, male and female; and of the animals that are not clean, two, a male and its female; also of the birds of the sky, seven pairs, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

Chaldean Paraphraser: "Come, you and every man of your household, into the ark."

Many Hebrews hold the opinion that the commands for the flood and the construction of the ark were given in the 480th year of Noah's life, when the Lord said, "And the days of that man shall be one hundred and twenty years." After this time had elapsed and the ark was constructed within that period, the Lord said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household," that is, every man of your household.

The reason why he himself should be saved while all others perished in the flood was given when he said, "For I have seen you righteous before me in this great generation." Indeed, the virtue of righteousness is so highly regarded by God that because of it not only is the righteous man saved from disaster and destruction, but also his entire household. If this virtue had not been found in that one man, undoubtedly the whole world would have perished in the flood without any survivors, and no human seed would have been

left. The entire species would have been irrecoverably destroyed, just as Sodom and the neighboring cities were. Therefore, by the merit of this virtue, a remnant was left, and the whole world was renewed and established. For this reason, Noah and all his household were commanded to enter the ark, along with all kinds of animals, to preserve their offspring on the face of all the earth.

And indeed, eight human souls were saved, but of clean animals, seven pairs each. It is not that fourteen of each species were taken; for if such a multitude of animals were taken, the ark would have been overly crowded, and it would have been difficult to provide food for so many. Furthermore, it was not necessary; for these animals were saved to preserve their offspring on the earth. While only eight human souls, the primary species, were saved, why then were fourteen of the brute animals saved? Therefore, animals were taken in seven pairs, meaning seven individuals of each species: six for propagation, and the seventh was saved for sacrifice, which Noah offered to God as a pleasing aroma after the flood from all the clean animals. As for unclean animals, only pairs were saved, male and female, for the purpose of propagation.

But how did Noah know which animals were clean or unclean? For the law distinguishing clean and unclean animals had not yet been given, which was established in the time of Moses. Certainly, it can be said that God, who knows all things and commanded these to him, taught him which animals were clean and which were unclean, aside from the knowledge of natural things that he had, since he was also notable for his skill in agriculture and rightly cultivating the earth, being the first to plant and cultivate a vineyard.

But since everything God made is said to be good and very good - for it is approved by the Creator: "And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" - how can anything be called unclean, which was approved and praised by the Creator? Certainly, all things

that God made are very good; but which things are suitable and appropriate for human use and consumption and which are not, nature itself has judged: and these indeed are called clean, and those unclean. For indeed, in some places some people abstain from certain things as unclean and disapproved; but others consume those same things, being led to it by custom. Thus, it was also then. The very knowledge inherent in the righteous taught which were suitable for food, and which were unsuitable and unclean; not that they are so in themselves, but that they are regarded as unclean. And why do we consider horses and donkeys and similar animals unclean for food, although they feed on herbs and legumes, while we consider other quadrupeds that feed on those very things suitable for food, even many that feed on unclean substances? Clearly, the very knowledge provided to us by God through nature itself and instinct teaches us, and custom greatly influences, so that we generally consider suitable and clean foods what others dread and detest; and we also abhor many things that others are accustomed to eating.

Verses 4-5: "For in seven more days I will cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.

Hebrew Text: "For after seven more days I will rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe out all existence that I have made from the face of the earth." And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him.

Chaldean Paraphraser: "For after a period of seven more days, I will rain moisture upon the earth, etc."

Many say that these seven days were lacking to complete the time of one hundred and twenty years, during which the Lord threatened the world with the flood, and when these days were completed, that great cataclysm began.

Others, however, say that God added these days to the appointed time because of the mourning for Methuselah, who died in the year of the flood; and since he excelled in righteousness during his life, God did not wish him to perish in the floodwaters but to die the death of the righteous. Therefore, after his death, God allotted these seven days in his honor so that his funeral mourning might be completed.

But I believe that God extended the time by these seven days for another reason before bringing the flood, because the mercy of God is without number, and His goodness is an infinite treasure. He foretold this universal disaster and the utter destruction of humanity one hundred and twenty years before bringing it, so that He might make those wicked men more amendable and lead them to repentance, in order to have mercy on them. He foretold the imminent destruction so that the fear of such a great calamity might turn them away from evil. But they did not cease from wickedness; rather, they pursued it more intensely. Yet the most merciful God still had compassion. For humans are naturally somewhat negligent when punishment is either uncertain or far in the future; but when they know that dangers are imminent, when distress is at the doors, when tribulation is upon them, they humble themselves and show much repentance.

For thus it happened to the Ninevites, whose wickedness ascended before God no less than this; when they heard that "in forty more days Nineveh will be overthrown," they humbled themselves, ceased from their evil deeds, and performed repentance for their past actions in fasting, ashes, and sackcloth, from the greatest to the least, even extending these acts of repentance to the animals, in order to obtain the mercy of the Lord. They did not despair of mercy despite the short time interval, but, terrified by the impending destruction, they turned from their evil ways and from the violence in their hands, saying, "Who knows if God will turn and relent, and turn

away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?" And the most merciful God saw their works, and in that very short time, was appeased by their momentary repentance, and had mercy on them.

God also attempts this here; He foretells it seven days in advance, hoping that out of fear and terror of the great calamity and utter destruction threatened for the seventh day, those people might humble themselves, cease from their evil deeds, and through humble repentance, appease God and obtain His mercy. For they also had Noah, a preacher of righteousness, who, according to God's will, proclaimed the divine threat of the flood and urged all to repent. Thus, He says: "After seven more days I will rain." He means, "I mercifully wish to wait seven more days for them to repent; for seven days are enough for them to cleanse and erase their committed sins if they truly wish to repent from their hearts. But if they do not wish to, then I will begin to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights."

Indeed, God could have caused all the rain to fall in a single day, or even in a single moment; but He deliberately chose to do it in this manner, wanting both to instill fear and to provide an opportunity for them to escape the impending punishment. For even if, when the rain began to bring about their destruction, they had been led to repentance, surely the wrath of the Lord would have been appeased; just as when the wrath of the Lord blazed against the children of Israel, and a great fire came forth from the Lord to consume them, and it had already devoured the edges of the camp: Moses prayed to the Lord, and the fire was extinguished. Again, when God wanted to destroy them, and the wrath had already gone out from the Lord, and the plague was raging, Aaron ran into the midst of the assembly that was being ravaged by the fire, and standing between the living and the dead, he offered incense and prayed to the Lord, and the plague ceased. Similarly, if the wrath had gone forth from the Lord and the plague had already begun, and if they had sincerely repented and

sought mercy, it certainly would not have been denied them. But because they did not repent at all, they were destroyed.

Verses 6-9: Noah was about six hundred years old when the floodwaters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two, male and female, they went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah.

Hebrew Text: Noah was six hundred years old, and the floodwaters were upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two, they came to Noah into the ark, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

The Hebrew text does not include the word "about" that is present in our text, but shows that Noah was exactly six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth, from which he and his entire household, fleeing, entered the ark. Likewise, all kinds of animals, according to the Lord's command, to which all things obey, entered by themselves without Noah's labor, as God had instilled this instinct in them. The animals came two by two, that is, always in pairs, male and female, the mate of each, to preserve their offspring on the earth. Noah, as he had received the command from the Lord, allowed them to enter and assigned a specific place to each: for he had made compartments or nests in the ark, so that gentle animals had one place and ferocious ones another, and they would not harm each other.

Verses 10-12: And after seven days, the waters of the flood came upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the

second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened, and rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Hebrew Text: And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year, in the year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

Chaldean Paraphraser: Similarly.

The Hebrew months are: נִיסָן (Nisan), which is March; אֵיָר (Iyyar), April; סִינָן (Sivan), May; תַּמּוּז (Tammuz), June; אָב (Av), July; אֵלּוּל (Elul), August; תִּשְׁרִי (Tishri), September; מַרְחֶשְׁוֹן (Marheshvan), October; כִּסְלִיו (Kislev), November; טֵבֵת (Tevet), December; שֵׁבַט (Shevat), January; אָדָר (Adar), February; and וְאֶדָר שֵׁנִי (Veadar), the second Adar, or embolismic February; since they use lunar months and make an embolism every third year, which is a year of thirteen months.

The Hebrews also have two beginnings of the year: one for secular matters and another for sacred matters. For secular affairs, the year begins in תִּשְׁרִי (Tishri), which is September; for they believe, according to Rabbi Eliezer, that the world was created in September, because the trees were laden with fruit at the creation of the world: and the time of fruits is September; hence after the autumnal equinox, when the old year is stripped of its fruits, they take the beginning of the new year from September. For sacred matters, they begin the year in נִיסָן (Nisan), which is March, according to the verse: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you;" and Rabbi Joshua indeed believes that the year simply begins from that month and that the world was created in that month, as also our people hold.

Therefore, it has been debated among the Hebrews whether this second month, in which the flood is said to have begun, is אֵיָר (Iyyar), which is April and the second month following נִסָּן (Nisan), or מַרְחֶשְׁוֶן (Marheshvan), which is October, the second month from September. And this opinion is more appealing to the Hebrews, both because they believe September to be simply the first month of the year from creation, and March to be instituted as the first month by divine command, and therefore it is said: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you:" meaning that it was not first at the beginning, but was instituted as the first month, because in it the children of Israel were brought out, by God's help, from the harsh servitude of the Egyptians; and also because October is still a month of rains and showers. Some of our own people also accept this opinion.

Nor is it sufficiently clear to me which opinion should be followed; however, I will express what I think, leaving the thoughts of wiser men to themselves. Therefore, since the years of Noah's life are enumerated here, and any year consists of months, I would think that these months should also be referred to the same thing. Thus, when it is said that the flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, just as the beginning of Noah's years is not sought to be the same time as the simple renewal and beginning of the year, but rather the time when Noah was born; so likewise, the second month should not be taken as the one following the first month of the renewed year, but the second month after the first month of the six hundredth year of Noah's life.

For it is customary that the months, from which the years are made up, are reckoned according to the calculation of years, and just as the emerging year of anyone begins from a certain point, so also the months are reckoned from that point, as we read in Ezekiel: "And it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month;" and in Jeremiah: "And it came to pass in that

year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month;" and in many other places of Sacred Scripture, in which the months are reckoned according to the calculation of years.

And certainly, if it is understood in this way, all that ambiguity is removed, and no inconvenience follows. For if the second month is taken in the order of the months of the year, indeed some inconveniences present themselves to us. For the ark is said to have rested in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh or, according to the Hebrews, seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Armenia; whence only five months would have intervened from the time the flood began until the ark's rest. But certainly, many more months intervened; for it rained upon the earth for forty days and forty nights; afterward, the waters prevailed upon the earth for one hundred fifty days; after the one hundred fifty days, the waters began to recede. But if these days are counted, they will make much more than five lunar months, which the Hebrews use according to the rule of Sacred Scripture, and even more so as many days flowed from the time the waters began to recede until the ark rested. For to diminish that little amount of water by which the lower part of the ark was submerged, time flowed from the seventeenth day of the seventh month until the first day of the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains appeared; for the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above all the high mountains that are under the entire sky: the ark, however, floated high above. Therefore, from the time the waters began to recede until the ark rested, several days intervened, which constitute a greater number than the aforementioned days. Consequently, divine Scripture would clearly state or include a falsehood, which cannot be.

Thus we interpret this passage: "And after seven days, the waters of the flood came upon the earth," as was foretold: "For in seven more days I will cause it to rain upon the earth," etc. Because that

generation, even with the impending disaster and the utmost destruction standing at the doorsteps, did not wish to be afraid, nor to humble themselves and repent from their hearts, after the seven days had passed, during which the most merciful God still wished to wait for their repentance, when they had not repented of their most wicked deeds, He sent the flood in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month of that six hundredth year, on the seventeenth day of that month.

As for the time of year when the flood occurred, I would think it occurred at the time when the wet planets are in conjunction with the rainy signs; these conjunctions usually happen in January and February when the sun is in Aquarius and Pisces. It is said that floods occur due to the influence of such a conjunction in some regions: such was the great flood of Deucalion among the Thessalians, of which there is a fable by Ovid and in Juvenal; also the flood during the reign of Ogyges, the king of the Thebans, who built Thebes in Boeotia, was a great cataclysm, as St. Augustine reports, and much greater than the one during Deucalion's time, which inundated a large part of the earth. In Plato and other ancient philosophers, several other floods are also mentioned; these certainly were caused by the power of those conjunctions.

However, this universal and greatest flood, where the waters inundated so far as to prevail fifteen cubits above all the high mountains under the whole heaven, was accomplished with these natural causes indeed contributing, but not sufficient in themselves, augmented by the omnipotent power and might of God increasing the force and power of natural causes. Therefore, it is said: "I, even I, will bring a flood of waters upon the earth."

To show that this flood was beyond the powers of nature, it is said: "All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and rain fell for forty days and

forty nights." Certainly, neither the heavens have windows that can be opened, nor the deep has fountains; but it is a figurative speech, indicating metaphorically that the earth was seized by a great storm and the greatest torrents of rain descended from the heavens; as if the sky had opened and the waters above the firmament had descended most abundantly with great noise and tumult, so that rivers rather than rain seemed to fall from the sky, as if the heavens had burst open; or as if the great heavenly urns, like the channels of rivers, were pouring out the greatest quantities of waters.

Furthermore, by "heaven" here we understand the middle region of the air, where waters are contained in the clouds, like rivers in channels, and where the greatest flood and cataclysm, by God's command, were generated. By the "great deep," many understand the ocean, which is the greatest sea; "the abyss" designates an immense mass of the deepest waters. Sometimes, however, "abyss" is taken to mean the caverns and chasms of the earth, as the Holy Prophet said: "And you brought me up again from the depths of the earth;" and thus Rabbi Abrabanel explains that the waters arose from subterranean places, which are under the earth, as if from fountains.

Therefore, both the heaven and the earth abundantly brought forth waters, and from the waters that poured copiously from the heavens and those that emerged from the earth, immense chasms of profound depth and the deepest gulfs of waters were made to destroy all flesh by that immense mass of waters and the insatiable whirlpools.

Verses 13-16: On that very day, Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark; they and every beast according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort. They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was

the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in from outside.

Hebrew Text: On this very day, Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark; they and every beast according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every winged creature. And they went to Noah into the ark, two by two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

The Chaldean Interpreter has: בְּכֶרֶן; which is the same as עֶצֶם: in the body of the day, on that very day, at that very moment; and for "The Lord shut him in": And the Lord protected him with His word over him.

The Sacred Scripture shows Noah's obedience and execution of all commands, not without God's assistance and singular help; for it says that all these things were done on that very day, that is, on the very day when the cataclysm began to descend from heaven. It was indeed impossible for all these things to be done in one day, the entire arrangement of humans and animals in the ark, all kinds of beasts, livestock, reptiles, birds, and all winged creatures, as the Lord had commanded. But with God's help, all were accomplished, who always stood by the righteous, so that he would not be oppressed or killed by that very wicked and most sinful generation, by whom he was greatly hated because he was opposed to their works, or at least be hindered from the work; for they would have wanted him to perish along with all the others, indeed above all as the most hated. But God stood by him, protecting him from the

wicked so that no harm would come to him, although they greatly desired it, and he remained unharmed; for by his righteousness he condemned the world, becoming an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

And behold, the clearer protection of God over him: "The Lord shut him in from outside," it says. He had commanded Noah to coat the ark inside and out with pitch to seal the seams of the planks so that they would not allow the hostile waters to enter; however, the door of the ark, which he had placed on the side, he could coat from the inside, but not from the outside. But God supplied what man could not; for He shut the door from the outside and sealed it so firmly that no water could seep through its cracks into the ark. This certainly seems to suggest the understanding in our Edition.

But if we understand what is in the Hebrew text according to the Chaldean Paraphrase, another meaning presents itself to us peacefully: "And the Lord protected him with His word over him," it says, because from above, God took care of the ark and guided it as a helmsman. For who performed the role of the helmsman so that the ark, caught in that severe and intolerable storm, while it was borne aloft by the flooding waters, driven by the force of the powerful and impelling winds, would not crash into the crags of huge mountains and perish in an irreparable and final shipwreck? Or how could it withstand such great onslaughts of the waves, when the enormous masses of water and storms, like the highest mountains, ascended to the heavens and descended to the abyss? How did that ark not submerge under those high, dark waves, in that immense chasm of waters and insatiable whirlpools, when below there was the abyss of waters, on every side waves like mountains rising and falling, and from above the most abundant downpour of waters from the sky was pouring, which could not only have overwhelmed that ark but could have buried and submerged the whole world in water? But from above, God was protecting it, whose power nothing can

resist; therefore, no force of waters or winds could harm the ark, nor could it ever be submerged; but fortified by God's protection and enjoying divine governance from above, it was made higher than the waters, and made its inhabitants very secure; amidst so many and such great dangers of swelling waves and pressing, impelling winds, it remained firm, never in danger of being broken, because it was fortified on all sides by the power of God.

Verses 17-20: The flood continued for forty days on the earth, and the waters increased and lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. The waters rose very high on the earth, covering all the high mountains under the entire sky. The waters rose above the mountains by fifteen cubits, covering them.

Hebrew Text: The flood was forty days on the earth, and the waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it was raised above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark went upon the face of the waters. The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters rose fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

This shows how immense the abyss of waters became and the extent of the rain. The flood, that is, the greatest cataclysm of waters descending copiously from the sky, lasted for forty days, during which it rained continuously without rest. The day here must be understood as a natural day of twenty-four hours; for it was said above: "I will cause it to rain for forty days and forty nights." And the waters increased: that is, they inundated greatly; the ark, because it was constructed from pine or cedar wood most suitable for floating on water, was lifted up high from the earth, as the waters had flooded, filling all the adjoining places of the earth. The waters

prevailed greatly: that is, they were very strong, uprooting trees, demolishing buildings, and overthrowing everything.

Some Hebrews say that the air and the earth were turned into water, and therefore the waters grew and prevailed so much. However, this does not please Rabbi Abrabanel, who says that all the waters that resided under the earth ascended, bursting forth as if from fountains, and rising, lifted the ark high.

Moses describes the extraordinary extent of this cataclysm in great detail. First, he calls the rains descending from the sky a flood to show that it rained with very copious showers and that the waters flowed from the sky as if they were rivers. Second, he says that the waters increased so much that they grew high enough to lift the ark up to a great height. Third, the waters inundated so much that they filled everything on the surface of the earth. Fourth, they flooded to such an extent that they prevailed greatly over the earth, covering not only the flat areas but also the mountains. Fifth, not just moderate mountains like hills, but high mountains; and not just the mountains of this region, but all the high mountains under the entire sky; all mountains everywhere. Finally, the floodwaters covered all the mountains, not just at the surface level so that someone could escape by fleeing to the high mountains, but the waters were fifteen cubits higher than all the mountains under the entire sky, meaning even the highest mountains were submerged by fifteen cubits.

Therefore, those who say that the waters of the flood did not reach the height of the Caucasus or Olympus mountains, or did not even touch the Garden of Eden, do not seem to me to be thinking correctly. For it says that the floodwaters were fifteen cubits higher than all the high mountains under the entire sky; it does not say they surpassed only the mountains of the east, or only those of the west, north, or south; not just the mountains of Armenia, or of any other region, but all the high mountains under the entire sky. And it did

not simply surpass them, but it rose fifteen cubits higher than even the highest mountains.

Verses 21-23: And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, birds, animals, beasts, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and every man. Everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens; they were blotted out from the earth.

Hebrew Text: And all flesh that moved upon the earth expired, in the birds, in the livestock, in the beast, and in every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth: and all mankind. Everything in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, out of everything that was on dry land, died. And every existing thing was blotted out, which was upon the face of the ground, from man to livestock, to creeping things, and to the birds of the heavens, and they were blotted out from the earth.

Surely all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth. For if He rewards the righteous, He grants much greater and richer gifts than the merits of their righteousness demand. If He punishes the wicked for their crimes, He inflicts much lighter punishments than their perverse merits require: He punishes, I say, less than they deserve. Could He not have destroyed that wicked generation with burning flames and immediately consumed them by delivering them alive to the voracious fire? Indeed, He could; for He thus destroyed Sodom and the neighboring cities, and thus He will burn the whole world in the final judgment. But in His mercy, He made them be punished more lightly by being submerged and suffocated by water, so that they did not even feel death.

Thus all flesh was consumed, that is, all flesh expired. In Hebrew, it is written: וַיָּגוּעַ, from the root גוּעַ, which means to die not from a long illness or severe disease or with great pain, but to die gently.

Therefore, in this way, the most merciful God destroyed that wicked generation and willed that they die so that they barely felt their passing, which was otherwise owed to nature: they laid down their lives without pain and torment as a punishment; for those submerged in water die gently and without pain, and they lay down their lives without torment.

Thus, in this way, all flesh perished, and all mankind perished; and if there were giants at that time on earth, their great stature and vastness of body could not save them from the flood. For even if they had climbed the highest mountains, they could not be saved there, because the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above all the high mountains; but the giants did not reach that height. For instance, Og, the king of Bashan, who alone survived from the race of giants that existed after the flood, was scarcely nine cubits tall, as we read in Deuteronomy: "In Rabbath of the children of Ammon, a bed of iron is shown, nine cubits in length." The most baseless fiction of the Hebrews is that they say that Og was a survivor from the race of giants who existed before the flood, whereas it is said here that all humans were blotted out by the flood and that only Noah and those with him in the ark were left, as it follows:

Verses 24: And Noah alone remained, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth for one hundred and fifty days.

Hebrew Text: And only Noah survived, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth for one hundred and fifty days, or they were strong.

This means that when the continuous rain of forty days had increased the waters to such an extent and they had prevailed exceedingly, so much so that they were fifteen cubits higher than the peaks of the high mountains, the waters remained in that strength for one hundred and fifty days without any decrease.

Some count this number of days from the first day of the rains; but it is much better as we have said. For when Moses described the extent of the flood, stating that the waters had prevailed during the forty days of the cataclysm, so much so that they covered all the mountains and were fifteen cubits higher, he now records the time during which the floodwaters remained at that great height, saying that the waters remained in that excess and strength for one hundred and fifty days.

Chapter Eight

Verses 1-3: But the Lord remembered Noah and all the living creatures and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and the Lord sent a wind upon the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the great deep and the windows of heaven were closed, and the rain from heaven was restrained. The waters receded from the earth, going and returning, and they began to decrease after one hundred and fifty days.

Hebrew Text: And God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed, and the rain from heaven was restrained. The waters returned from the earth, continually receding, and the waters decreased after the end of one hundred and fifty days.

So too the Chaldaean Interpreter.

The Jerusalem Targum: And he remembered in his good mercy what is with him, Noah, and he caused the spirit of mercies to pass.

But God remembered. Certainly, forgetfulness cannot occur in God; for the supreme ideas of the divine mind, which are like intellectual forms in our intellect, cannot be erased in any way, such that forgetfulness would result from that erasure. For the divine intellect is full of all the reasons of living beings and through its very essence, which is the first and highest of intellectual beings, it understands all things immutably, and all things are always openly and manifestly clear to it in the brightest light. Memory in God is nothing more than the divine intellect together with the present object, that is, its intelligible object, just as in us. However, I speak of memory in us not as it pertains to the senses, which is the last of

the interior senses after the estimative power, located in the posterior ventricle of the brain towards the back of the head, which by its nature is meant to retain and preserve the phantasms of sensibles or rather the intentions of sensible species and is like a storeroom or repository for storing the intentions of the preceding senses' sensible species; but I speak of intellectual memory, which is naturally suited to preserve intellectual species. Besides sensitive memory, intellectual memory must be posited in man, so that just as the former retains the intentions of sensible phantasms, so the latter is like an abacus and treasury of intelligible species. For intelligible species cannot be preserved in a bodily organ: the organ is material, but these species are immaterial; just as sensible species or intentions cannot be preserved in the intellect: they are too coarse to enter the highest power of the intellect.

For storing the intentions of sensible phantasms, sensitive memory is given: for preserving intellectual species, like in a treasury, intellectual memory is provided. This is nothing other than the intellect itself, which, insofar as it forms and produces the species of intelligible things, that is, makes phantasms intelligible by irradiating them with its light, is called the active intellect; insofar as it receives the formed intelligible species in itself to produce understanding, it is termed the possible intellect; and insofar as it keeps those same species stored within itself, so that, even if the intellect does not actively understand, it nonetheless holds the intelligible species stored within, so that when it wishes it can turn itself toward them and become the actual intellect and generate understanding, it is called memory.

Therefore, memory is nothing other than the intellect itself with the present object, either in itself or in its image. For the intellect always has the images of intelligible things, that is, present intelligible species, even if it does not always understand; for the mere absence of the object or species is not by itself naturally able to produce

understanding: but when the intellect turns itself towards them, then understanding is generated.

Thus, in God, memory is plainly nothing other than the divine and deific intellect with the present object. And in us, indeed, many changes can occur around memory, both because species can be erased and vanish from memory, and because in us the power of remembering is different from the act of remembering, when the intellect turns itself towards a species already received and is said to remember and recollect it, when that species does not immediately occur to it and it requires it. There is also a difference between the habit of memory, which is to preserve stored species, and in memory there is mutability with respect to both the habit and the act. But in God, both act and habit and power are entirely the same, one thing, one unchangeable essence; nor can the species, that is, the ideas of intelligible things, be erased in the divine mind, because they are eternal and unchangeable and one with the substance of God. For God first understands His own essence; and in it and through it, in the most simple and unified act, He understands and knows all other things contingent upon Himself. But not without the divine will or the determination of the divine will, because God knows all things through their causes: the cause of all creatures is the divine will and its most free determination, which produces all things into existence.

And thus God caused the waters of the flood to diminish by the determination of His will, and so He is said to have remembered Noah, not because He had previously forgotten, but because, seeing all things with His divine intellect, with everything being present to Him, having seen that the entire impious world had perished by the inundation of the waters, He then, with His infinite mercy, willed by the determination of His will that the world's salvation be provided for once again; and this is what it means for God to remember, to will to show mercy. Sacred Scripture accommodates itself to our weakness and speaks much of God through anthropopathic

expressions. For seeing that all men had perished and those few who were left alive in the ark were in such distress and difficulty, not knowing when such calamities would end: seeing all things and looking into the innermost thoughts of hearts, He determined by His will that the waters should diminish.

This determination, however, which we speak of, in no way posits any change in God, except on the part of the effect, even though God willed it in reality, just as He willed to create the world; but just as creation posits no change in God, even though it was done by the determination of the divine will, so neither does this: because just as creation is a relation of reason in God, so too is this determination of the divine will. However, a relation of reason induces no change, except on the part of the other term; and this relation is not called a relation of reason as if it were invented by reason, but it is known by reason or by the comparison of things known by reason. Thus, we understand: And God remembered Noah.

But one must remember what was said above: I will establish my covenant with you, or I will set up my covenant: for this remembrance refers to the restoration of that covenant, as we explained above; therefore, Moses follows with speaking of the diminishing of the waters. The causes of this matter he gives first, indeed, because at God's command the fountains of the deep were closed so that no more waters would rise from the earth; the windows of heaven were also closed, because by God's command those cataracts of rain from heaven were restrained; then indeed He sent a strong wind, which, passing over, dried the waters. But certainly, the wind, even if very strong, could not have dried up such a great mass of waters and immense abyss unless He had commanded the waters to return to their place, that is, unless He had confined them to their original places, as He had done at creation when He commanded that the waters be gathered into one place and the dry land appear. The waters began to decrease from the end of

one hundred and fifty days; indeed, after the forty days of the flood, the waters were strong for one hundred and fifty days and covered the earth in their strength; but after these days they began to diminish from that strength.

Verses 4-5: And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, on the mountains of Armenia. And the waters continued to decrease until the tenth month; for in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

Hebrew Text: The ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to go and decrease until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

Moses continues, showing the diminution and decrease of the waters, and says that from the end of the one hundred and fiftieth day until the seventh month, the waters had decreased so much, which had risen fifteen cubits above all the high mountains, that in the seventh month, due to the scarcity of waters, the ark rested upon the mountains, no longer able to float upon the surface of the waters: but it rested upon the mountains of Armenia, taking refuge there. By God's providence, it happened that it found a suitable resting place upon the large rocks of those mountains; for ships, if they fall upon rough places, or even if they strike against sandbanks or sandy places, perish by shipwreck; but this ark, protected by God's safeguard, was not at all in danger of being broken, and it rested upon the mountains of Armenia, finding there a resting place where it remained fixed and immovable.

This happened in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, or the seventeenth, according to the Hebrew Text, as the Chaldaean Interpreter also has. But our Interpreter, following the

Septuagint, said the twenty-seventh day of the month: for the Septuagint has it thus. However, how this seventh month is to be understood presents no small difficulty. Indeed, if we take it so that those one hundred and fifty days are counted beyond the second month, in which the flood began, we will plainly have seven months; for from the seventeenth day of the second month to the seventeenth day of the seventh month, one hundred and fifty days intervene: for one hundred and fifty days constitute five months; and thus most of the Hebrew doctors reckon, among whom is Rabbi Abrabanel.

But many inconveniences follow from this. First, because the flood lasted for forty days, during which the waters multiplied and greatly prevailed upon the earth; after these days, the waters were strong upon the earth for one hundred and fifty days. These days, however, constitute six months and more than ten days; therefore, it was not the seventh month, but the eighth as well, since the flood had begun to recede. But if you say, as they think, that those forty days of the flood are contained within the number of one hundred and fifty days, even so, the matter is not settled; for according to the custom of Sacred Scripture and the Hebrews, to whom Moses was writing, lunar months must be taken, of which one consists of twenty-nine days, the other of thirty days, so that two months do not exceed fifty-nine days, nor do they ever reach sixty. Therefore, one hundred and fifty days would constitute five lunar months, and still three or at least two days remain. Therefore, it would not have been the seventeenth day of the seventh month, but the nineteenth or twentieth.

Then, when Scripture says that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains, it would be the same as saying that it rested on the one hundred and fiftieth day. But it says that for one hundred and fifty days the waters were strong upon the earth, and from the end of one hundred and

fifty days they began to decrease, that is, after one hundred and fifty days. Therefore, just as the ark did not rest before the one hundred and fiftieth day, so neither on that day: because on that day the waters were no less strong, and after it they began to decrease. Therefore, Scripture falsely says that on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark rested, if the seventh month is to be counted from the second, in which the flood began; and especially because it is necessary to admit that some days flowed, from the time the waters began to decrease until the time when the ark rested. For a little water, by which the lower part of the ark was submerged, flowed out from the seventeenth day of the seventh month until the first of the tenth month: for in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

Nor can it be said that the ark was submerged in the waters by fifteen whole cubits: for then it could not have floated at all upon the mountains and been carried upon the surface of the waters: but it would have rested. Therefore, after much water had flowed out and decreased, the ark rested upon the mountains and consequently after a long time; for a longer time was required for the immense heights of the waters to decrease, since they were larger and more vast, the higher they had ascended: just as we see in those things which grow in the sphere's orbit; for the farther the periphery is from the center, the wider and larger it is; but those waters had grown in an orbit since the universal flood existed, inundating the entire earth everywhere under all heaven.

Therefore, without any controversy, we understand the seventh month from the time when the flood began to inundate. For if we take the forty days of rain and the one hundred and fifty days in which the waters obtained the earth in their greatest strength, according to the computation of lunar months we will have six whole months and thirteen days; but the days that are lacking until the seventeenth day from the beginning of the decrease of the waters

to the time when the ark rested, it is very reasonable to assume that they flowed in between; and so from the beginning of the flood to the seventh month and the seventeenth day of the month, it will have come to pass without any contradiction.

According to this order, the tenth month must also be understood, the first day of which the tops of the mountains appeared, so that from the resting of the ark to the time when the tops of the mountains appeared so as to be seen, nearly two and a half months flowed in between.

Verses 6-9: And after forty days had passed, Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and sent forth a raven, which went out and did not return until the waters were dried up from the earth. He also sent forth a dove after him, to see if the waters had ceased from the surface of the ground. But the dove, finding no place to rest the sole of her foot, returned to him in the ark; for the waters were upon the entire earth. He stretched out his hand, and took her, and brought her into the ark.

Hebrew Text: And it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and he sent forth a raven; which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. He also sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned to him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of all the earth. He put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

And after forty days had passed. From the time the tops of the mountains were seen, forty days having passed, Noah is said to have opened the window of the ark. However, the name of the window is not the same in Hebrew as above; there it was called צֹהַר (tzohar), but here it is חֶלֶון (chalon). Most of the Hebrews, however, believe that by the second name is meant the very window and opening; by

the first, however, a certain precious transparent stone, like glass or crystal, which could close the opening of the window so that winds and rain would not enter, and at the same time also receive light to illuminate the dwelling. For transparent bodies do not obstruct light at all, but rather intensify it; and through this window closed with that stone, Noah could indeed see what was outside, and through that transparent material, the tops of the mountains appeared to him as soon as they began to emerge from the waters.

However, to send forth the raven, he opened that window; the raven, sent forth through the window, went out and did not return. The Hebrew text, however, has: It went forth to and fro; the meaning, however, is the same. For the raven went out of the ark and never returned to Noah in the ark; but it kept returning near the ark, going to and fro around the ark, as Rabbi Abrabanel says, and it was always near the ark, always flying around it, until Noah went out of the ark.

Rabbi Abrabanel reports that some say the raven did not return to the ark because it had hatched chicks; and as naturalists say, when raven chicks are born, they come out white; therefore, the raven, thinking these degenerate offspring not to be its own, leaves them and goes far away from them, not bringing them food. However, our people say the raven fed on the corpses of the dead, and for this reason did not return to the ark. Many Hebrews, including the same doctor, also say that Noah did not send the raven to see if the waters had abated, as this is said of the dove's mission, not the raven's; but to see if the cities, houses, towers, and palaces still stood; because ravens are known to nest in such places.

However, the raven did return, but not to Noah in the ark; therefore, Noah, being no wiser, sent out the dove to see if the waters had abated from the surface of the ground; but the dove, not finding a place to rest the sole of her foot, that is, a suitable place to rest,

returned to Noah in the ark. But were not the tops of the mountains already free from water? Certainly. However, it is not in the nature of doves to make nests on the peaks of high mountains, where there are no trees; and although the tops of the mountains had appeared, due to the abundance of water, even the peaks were still covered with water: the ground, though freed from water, was entirely muddy: the whole plain was still full of water, because the waters were still upon the entire flat earth.

Verses 10-12: "But after waiting another seven days, he again sent out the dove from the ark; and she came back to him in the evening, carrying a freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth. Then Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth; and he waited another seven days and sent out the dove again, but she did not return to him anymore.

Hebrew Text: "And he waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth. So Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth; and he waited another seven days and sent out the dove again, and she did not return to him anymore.

Scripture shows that Noah did not immediately send out the dove after releasing the raven, but waited seven days and then sent it out for the first time; and when it returned, not having found a suitable place to rest, he waited another seven days before sending the dove out for the second time. This is what is meant by: 'But after waiting another seven days': another seven, he says, from those seven days he waited after releasing the raven. Thus, from the first day of the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains appeared, we have forty days and more than three weeks: the first, after the release of the raven, when he sent out the dove for the first time; the second, when he sent her out again and she returned to him in the evening

with a green olive branch in her mouth, or with a freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth, from which Noah knew that the waters had ceased or receded from the surface of the earth; nevertheless, he waited another seven days, and this is the third week, and he sent out the dove, which did not return to him anymore.

Rabbi Abrabanel gives the reason why Noah waited forty days and then three times seven days: "because all things are arranged by God in a quaternary number."

From the day the flood began to the day he sent out the dove from the ark for the third time, we have eleven completed months and one or two days. For if from the first day of the tenth month forty and three times seven days are counted, we reach the first or second day of the twelfth month, since forty and three times seven days make up twice thirty, which are two months, and one or two days are still left. If these eleven months are added to Noah's life, we arrive at the six hundred and first year and that very month, since when the flood began, he was in his six hundredth year and the second month. This is what follows:

Verses 13-14: "Therefore, in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters had diminished from the earth, and Noah opened the covering of the ark and looked, and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry."

Hebrew Text: "And it happened in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw, and behold, the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry."

When at last the earth had been freed from the injuries of the waters and had remained dry according to its natural condition, it is now declared, saying: In the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, the waters had dried up. The waters were not dried up, for by their very nature waters are moist, and moistness is the companion and symbol of coldness in water, which it has by its very nature; nor can water lose its moistness unless it loses its nature and is converted into earth or fire; for even if it is converted into vapor and air, it becomes much more humid, since air is extremely humid.

However, it is said that the waters were dried up because they had departed from the surface of the earth, returning to their place, where God had commanded them to go. When the earth had remained free from the flood, since it had absorbed an excessive amount of water during that flood, to the point where it was almost suffocated and nearly entirely turned into mud and slime, it was also freed from those waters that it had excessively absorbed with great loss and risk to its strength, thanks to the heat of the sun's rays, which, reflecting on it and excessively heating it, absorbed all that water suffused in the mud, turning it into vapor and drawing it upwards; hence the surface of the earth became dry and remained arid according to its natural condition, so that it could provide solid footing for the steps of animals and not swallow them up in mud. Therefore, in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, on the first day of the first month, the copious waters, returning to their place, left the earth free.

However, before it was completely dried from the waters it had absorbed, since it was almost entirely suffocated, time flowed until the twenty-seventh day of the second month. Then Noah, opening the covering of the ark, looked and saw that the earth was sufficiently dry and arid, so that it could provide solid footing for animals. And then, with a year and ten days having passed since the

day he entered the ark at God's command, he left it at the same command and order.

We learn from this chapter that all the years read up to this point are solar years, consisting of twelve months, since Sacred Scripture has declared that the flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah's life; afterward, with twelve months having passed, it said that in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life the flood ended. From this, it is clear that the years counted up to this point from the beginning are solar years, consisting of twelve months. Hence it follows:

Verses 16-17: Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you all the animals that are with you, of all flesh, both birds and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may swarm on the earth, be fruitful and multiply upon the earth."

Hebrew Text: And God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Every beast that is with you, of all flesh, both bird and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, bring out with you; and let them swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth, or let them swarm and increase and multiply."

Sacred Scripture recounts that, although the just and perfect man Noah, having opened the roof of the ark, saw that the earth was now sufficiently dry and arid, so much so that it could very well support the animals, he did not wish to leave the ark, neither he nor anyone else who was with him, but desired to wait for the divine command to go out, just as he had entered by the command and warning of God. Therefore, the Lord spoke to him, either by an inner inspiration that fell upon his mind, which is proper to God, or by any other means known to him, who knows all things, through which the just

man would most certainly know the divine will to be that he should go out from the ark to inhabit the earth.

"Go out," he said, "from the ark, you and your wife, your sons and your sons' wives." When he commanded him to enter the ark, he said, "Enter the ark, you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives": then he separated the men from the women, but now he joins them: for then was the time to be far from embraces and not to indulge in pleasures and delights, but in fasting, prayers, and tears, to appease God's wrath aroused against men. Therefore, God did not wish men to engage in marital relations in the ark, but to be pure and sanctified, abstaining from their wives and leading a celibate life. But now he joins them again when he commands them to go out from the ark; for he wishes them to give themselves to procreation, so that they might spread and propagate the human race far and wide: for this reason, he preserved them, so that the seed might be saved upon the face of the whole earth.

Similarly, he commands all other animals to be brought out from the ark and to engage in procreation to propagate their species; therefore, he says, "Be fruitful and multiply upon the earth": or "prolificate by procreating, so that you may multiply upon the earth." He wants those few men to grow into great nations and almost infinite peoples; therefore, he says, according to the Hebrew: שָׂרָצוּ (sar'atzu). Now, שָׂרָץ (saratz) means to generate and produce in multitude, like small fish and similar animals, which are generated in great numbers, so much so that they seem to swarm. Thus, it is said of the children of Israel in Egypt that they increased: וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ (va'yishretzu), and were born in multitude, or, as our Vulgate Edition has it, "they were multiplied as germs," perhaps because women bore twins or more children. Thus, he wishes these men to grow into great multitudes and multiply, so that they might fill the earth.

Verses 18-19: Therefore, Noah went out, and his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him; and all the animals, the cattle, and the creeping things that creep on the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark.

Hebrew Text: And Noah went out, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him; every beast, every creeping thing, every bird, everything that moves on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

Scripture shows Noah's obedience, who fulfilled the divine command exactly and thoroughly; for he depended entirely on the divine will. He went out of the ark, and from that sad and troublesome dwelling like a prison, in which he had remained enclosed for so long, bearing the cohabitation of beasts, stench, and inconveniences, where for so long he could not even breathe air except corrupted air: for the ark was sealed and closed on all sides, and neither air nor wind could enter. And the air that was drawn in becomes corrupted, which, however, both human and animal bodies need to enjoy to cool their lungs. And how was the air not corrupted for so long in the ark, where both humans and great numbers of various animals dwelt? And how great was the stench there from the corruption of the air and the habitation of unclean animals! But the just and perfect man bore all things, fearing no loss or danger to his safety, as he fulfilled God's commands: nor did he ever wish to leave that foul prison, unless God commanded it. However, at God's command, he immediately went out, and his sons and wives, and he brought out all the animals from the ark, according to their families, that is, according to their species, just as they had entered; the Hebrew text calls species families.

Verses 20-21: And Noah built an altar to the Lord, and taking from all the clean animals and birds, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart:

"I will never again curse the ground because of man; for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done."

Hebrew Text: And Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma and said to His heart: "I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

The Chaldean paraphrase translates it: "And God received his offering with favor, or with benevolence."

The Greek text reads: "And the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and the Lord, reflecting, said, etc."

When Noah had gone out of the ark, and had seen the vast expanse of the earth and the whole world, since the most merciful God, according to His great mercy and the multitude of His compassions, had almost restored all things to their former state, having wiped out the impious world with the flood of water, he kindled upon the altar of his sacred heart the most acceptable incense of prayers and thanksgivings with the fire of the most ardent charity, giving immense thanks with his mouth for such a great benefit and so much compassion. He also wished to offer sacrifices to God with a most devoted heart and voice of deeds. Therefore, he built an altar. For he said, "God has made for me this peace. And He will always be my God: His altar will often be stained with the blood of a tender lamb from our flocks." Therefore, he took from all the clean animals and offered burnt offerings to God; hence, seven pairs of clean animals entered the ark, so that three pairs might be preserved as seed for propagating the species, and the seventh might be offered to God as a burnt offering.

And the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, or soothing aroma. We accept this figuratively through anthropomorphism. For God is not an animal that He has a brain and, by breathing, draws vapors through mammillary processes to the caruncles or nipples of the brain, so that He might perceive the fragrance of odors: but God is spirit, who has neither flesh nor bones, the purest act and simplest intellect. Therefore, He is said to have smelled the pleasing aroma by a metaphor, because He accepted the burnt offerings with His favor due to Noah's righteousness and devotion, as if someone had smelled a sweet and most agreeable odor; and this aroma is called the aroma of rest, because it caused God to rest from His wrath, that is, so that He might not be angry anymore in the future.

Hence, He said: "I will never again curse the ground because of man." He did not say: "I will no longer afflict, correct, or chastise man; but I will not curse the ground again as I did: this is, I will no longer send a flood to destroy and devastate the earth, nor such general calamities and the total destruction of living beings, because the inclination and thought of the human heart are prone to evil from their youth." God sees the cruel war that the flesh always wages against the spirit: how it continuously lusts against the spirit: how it is always striving most eagerly toward evil: how it always stirs up the most pernicious desires and carnal cravings, which war against the soul, and always desires to dwell in carnal works, which are fornication, impurity, licentiousness, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, murders, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. Therefore, this flesh, the fuel of sin and the body of death, which is corrupt, burdens the soul excessively and continually distracts and entices it with its desires, so that when desire has conceived its wicked offspring, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is completed, it brings forth death. Therefore, seeing this, God, I say, seeing this weakness of pernicious flesh and its pitiable fragility, has

compassion and mercy. Because, therefore, the inclination and thought of the heart are naturally prone to evil from youth, He says, "I will not curse the ground anymore because of man, nor will I destroy every living soul."

Verses 22: "All the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease."

Hebrew Text: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease."

This is the covenant and the laws that God established from the beginning between heaven and earth, day and night; indeed, this covenant was broken at the time of the flood because of the wicked, and these words imply this. But now God promises Noah that He will re-establish this covenant, so that these things will never again fail in the future.

The Hebrews distinguish six seasons of the year: seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, allotting two months to each. They say that the time of seedtime is from the middle of September to the middle of November, and then begins the time of cold until the middle of January; from there until the middle of March is the time of winter; from this time until the middle of May is the time of harvest; after this follows the time of summer until the middle of July; and then from the middle of July to the middle of September is the time of heat and intense warmth. However, their months do not always correspond with ours; but their March partly aligns with our March and partly with April, and mostly with April.

We, however, assign only four seasons to the year: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Spring begins with Aries and lasts until Cancer; then summer lasts until Libra; from Libra begins autumn until Capricorn; and then winter lasts until Aries, where spring begins. During these times of the year, there is seedtime and harvest, cold

and heat: cold in winter, heat in summer; seedtime in autumn, harvest in spring.

God promises that these will never cease until the end of the world; day and night, by divine ordinance, will continue to alternate until the end of the age. All these things occur due to the movement of the lights, which are set for signs and seasons and days and years, hence God is said to have established a law between heaven and earth, which will never cease.

Chapter Nine

Verses 1-3: And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them:

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you shall be upon all the animals of the earth and upon all the birds of the sky; with everything that moves on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything."

Hebrew Text: And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them:

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the sky, in everything that crawls on the ground, and in all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every living thing that moves shall be food for you; just as the green plants, I give you everything."

God blessed Noah: that is, He increased grace, gave greater grace, and bestowed the most abundant gifts of blessings. What are these blessings? He said: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and let the fear and dread of you be upon all the animals of the earth."

Man indeed consists of two parts: the body, which is like matter, and the soul, which fulfills the role of actuality and form. In these two parts, human nature is perfectly constituted; and God, in His great mercy, enriches both parts with the most abundant blessings, without excluding their virtue: "Be fruitful and multiply." He increases the generative power to propagate the species, endowing it with the most abundant strength and fertility in the seed, so that those few humans and the small flock would grow into an infinite nation, into innumerable flocks, into a multitude that would cover the surface of the earth under the whole sky, resulting in thousands of generations. Just as generation is the most beloved and natural work of nature,

God also provided the most abundant generative power, which could not easily be exhausted or perish, and supplied the capacity for the entire prolongation of the world. This power resides in the body; the body provides the seat and organs for it, even though the power belongs to the vegetative soul, which in man does not differ from the rational substance but is contained in its substance along with the power of sensation, as a triangle is contained in a quadrilateral.

As reason naturally surpasses life and sensation, so man surpasses all animals, because man possesses reason, whereas animals do not ascend above sensation; therefore, it was said to man from his condition: "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over every beast and all the earth," because by nature man surpasses all; and by nature and power he rules all, though he is deprived of the dominion of many because of sin. Many kinds of irrational creatures have become like rebellious and contumacious servants to man, because man, due to sin, has become rebellious and contumacious to God. Many animals indeed openly wage war against man, attacking him with extreme ferocity and planning his death. By bodily strength, many prevail over man; they are both bolder and stronger and more powerful than him.

But truly, lest fierce beasts should seem to prevail entirely over humans, and lest they should attack to tear them to pieces, butcher, and devour them, divine providence took care to ensure that although humans might be physically less strong than many beasts, they would be much more powerful in reason. Hence, the most ferocious and terrible beasts would not attack humans to tear them to pieces and devour them, but would rather fear and dread them, tremble at their sight and presence. This is what He said:

"And the fear and dread of you shall be upon all the animals of the earth." This is a gift and blessing not only of the body but also from the principle of reason, which God has fortified in man; it does not

restore all animals to the obedience they had to man in the state of original innocence, but it makes man, by the gift of reason and the majesty of his countenance, feared and dreaded by animals.

However, since they might still perish from hunger even if they did not perish from the attack of animals, He provided them with suitable food, saying:

"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you." From the beginning, God had given humans the produce of the earth, the herbs, and the fruits of the trees for food, saying: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth and every tree which has in itself the seed of its kind, to be your food": now, in addition to these, He also allowed the flesh of animals, both terrestrial and aquatic, and birds for human consumption; and just as He previously gave herbs, so now He gives meat for food; hence He said: "Just as the green plants, I give you everything."

There were many reasons why God permitted the eating of meat, which He had not allowed humans from the beginning. First, because the strength of the earth was greatly weakened by the flood; for He said earlier: "And I will destroy all flesh with the earth." Therefore, the produce of the earth, the plants, the fruits, and seeds were always of much poorer quality and much weaker in strength after the flood than before; thus, they became less effective nourishment for sustaining humans and restoring the original moisture: for the less nutritious the food is, the less suitable it is for sustaining life.

Secondly, human nature itself had suffered some loss of strength and had become somewhat weaker. For natural strength diminishes continuously through generations; therefore, humans needed stronger food to maintain life without great loss of natural strength: and meat is much better nourishment than fruits and herbs.

Later, there might also have been another urgent reason for allowing them to eat meat at that time. When they had come out of the ark, they found the earth desolate; for no one had sown or harvested; no one had cultivated it for the entire year, nor could it produce anything edible during the whole year it was submerged by the floodwaters. So, lest humans should suffer from lack and scarcity of food, from hunger and destitution, He added new food, so that they could eat the flesh of animals and fish, of which there was an infinite number: and thus, the eating of meat and fish was introduced for the future.

But just as God gave the first man all the trees and fruits for food, reserving one tree for Himself, commanding the man not to eat from it, so that He might test his obedience and the observance of His command, and man might render this as a tribute to God as the Ruler and Lord of all: likewise, when He allowed these men, besides other elements, the flesh of animals and fish for food, He wanted them to abstain from one thing, and gave them this particular command, saying:

Verses 4-7: "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man. But you, be fruitful and multiply, spread over the earth and multiply in it."

Hebrew Text: "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And surely for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning; from every beast I will require it; and from man, from his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of

God made He man. But you, be fruitful and multiply; swarm on the earth and multiply in it."

The Chaldean interpreter has: "From the hand of man, from the hand of a man's brother; whoever sheds the blood of his brother, I will require the life of man."

There are many interpretations of this passage. Some think that eating flesh with its blood, that is, without draining the blood or separating it from the flesh, as in the case of strangled animals, is prohibited, as is established in Leviticus, where it is commanded that if anyone catches a wild animal or bird by hunting, they must drain its blood and cover it with earth. Others think that the eating of blood is simply prohibited, as the Hebrews are forbidden in Leviticus, under the penalty of death, from eating blood in any manner. Some say that the blood of beasts is heavy, earthy, and the cause of many diseases.

However, God is not instituting ceremonial precepts for any particular nation now, but commands them and all humans to avoid those things which by their very nature disrupt the human mind and reason and are destructive and disgraceful to humans. For what He commands here is to be observed by the entire human race universally, since in those humans to whom these things were prohibited, all humanity under heaven, every nation, every people, and every language were, as it were, contained in seed, and we have all been propagated from them and have drawn our origin from them.

Almost all Hebrews understand this to prohibit eating a still-living animal: for the Hebrew text says, "You shall not eat flesh with its life, its blood;" while the flesh, as long as it has its life and blood, is alive; but outside the animal, it is not alive. Therefore, He forbids eating living animals, which He had allowed for food: for this is savage and cruel, peculiar to the fiercest and most savage beasts, not

to humans, who are naturally clean and holy animals. And from this, every human being, who has not been transformed into the nature of beasts by a most shameful metamorphosis, abstains and recoils as from something inhuman.

This interpretation indeed pleases. But He wanted this precept to be established so that He might restrain the minds of humans, eager for slaughter, from ferocity and cruelty, lest humans, degenerating from their calm humanity and their kindly nature, should become so savage as to rage against humans with far more cruel ferocity than the fiercest beasts, hunt humans, and desire to eat human flesh and blood, like lions and whatever animals are even more cruel, gnashing for prey. Thus, homicide is especially prohibited and the savage cruelty of beasts should not be most savagely perpetrated upon humans.

In this entire series of words of blessing, the most merciful God seems to console that small group of people concerning the things that could cause their minds to be afflicted with sorrow and distress. These four things were especially significant. First of all, because all their parents, relatives, kinsmen, and friends had died, and they alone were left surviving. The death of these people greatly afflicts with sorrow and sadness because of the bond of love and friendship, which binds hearts; this sorrow grows especially when we have no others who are dearer and more beloved. So that they would not be burdened with this sorrow, behold, God says to them:

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." Do not grieve, He says, because you are left alone, utterly deprived of all your relatives, friends, and loved ones: behold, I will make you into a great nation, I will give you a great multitude of children, who will be much dearer and more beloved to you, and I will make you grow so that you will fill the entire earth under all heaven.

Secondly, they could be greatly afraid and weakened by fear, because they were few, and there were many bad beasts and fierce wild animals on the earth, which are hostile to humans; if these, driven by hunger, had attacked them, humans would certainly not have been able to protect themselves from them. Concerning this, too, He consoles them, saying:

"The fear and dread of you shall be upon all the animals of the earth." The bad beasts and the fierce wild animals will not attack you, He says, to devour you, even if they are much more numerous and stronger; for I will instill your fear in their estimation and make them, even if they are the strongest and fiercest, fear and tremble at your sight, and, terrified by fear, flee from you rather than pursue you.

Thirdly, they could be greatly distressed because they had indeed brought many provisions into the ark, but having fed themselves and the animals with those provisions for an entire year, they were now exhausted; they did not have the fruits of the trees that God had given to the first man; the earth had produced nothing, nor any herbs. Burdened by this sad thought, they said, "What shall we do? We have no food, we have no fruits, the earth has produced nothing; if we sow seeds, before they grow into herbs, form ears, and the harvest approaches, we will perish from hunger; if we plant trees, many times and years will pass before they grow and mature to produce fruits. Meanwhile, we will waste away from leanness and eventually die of hunger, consumed by a harsher death than all those who perished in the flood." Hence God consoles them concerning food, saying:

"All the fish of the sea are delivered into your hand; every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything." Do not waste away with thoughts of hunger, He says, if you do not have the fruits of the

trees, if the earth has produced nothing; behold, I give you new foods for your use; all the animals of the earth shall be food for you. And if these are not enough for you, because few remained with you in the ark due to the flood, behold, I give into your hands all the fish of the sea, whose number is infinite; for they did not perish in the flood. And do not shrink from the kind of this new food, for just as I gave you the green plants, so now I give you these, that you may enjoy these foods with as much delight and pleasure as you did the herbs and fruits of the trees before. Behold, you are abundantly and lavishly provided for so that you do not perish from hunger or waste away from leanness.

Fourthly, they could be greatly distressed by the fear, since they were very few; what if anger or strife had arisen among the brothers, and in their anger and quarrels they had killed one another, as Cain killed Abel? Their father was old and did not have more sons or daughters as Adam did after Abel's death; the sons had not yet begotten children, and among them was Ham, who was not a good man, nor much better than Cain. Therefore, they could rightly fear death by murder and slaughter. Thus, God consoles them by giving a strict command not to shed human blood, that is, not to kill any innocent person; and to more effectively restrain their minds from killing, He commands them not to be cruel even to the animals that He allowed them for food, not to eat the flesh of still-living animals with their life and fresh blood, not to tear and devour their limbs like the most savage beasts that kill and tear apart living animals and devour them. Thus, He says:

"You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." Just as the life of an animal is its blood, because blood makes it alive; not that blood is the soul, but because it is the principal seat of the soul, and it preserves the soul in the body and fulfills many functions of vital operations. For it has local motion to all parts of the body to support and nourish them; it is hot; it generates the primal humor, which

provides nutrients to heat; it fills the body with spirits; it sustains and preserves life; it protects and strengthens the animal and provides nourishment, growth, warmth, and spirit to all parts. Therefore, blood is said to be the life of the animal, just as it is said in Leviticus: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood," both because the soul is in the blood, as it is said there, and because it most especially supports and preserves life. The soul is often taken in Sacred Scripture to mean the animal life that is contained in blood and breath; hence the soul is called living in whose nostrils is the breath of life. Because this command was instituted to restrain human cruelty:

"He said, 'I will require a reckoning for your lifeblood from every beast and from man.' Although I have permitted you to eat the flesh of any animals, just as you eat green plants, do not think that it is also permissible for you to eat the flesh of humans. For although man is an animal, has a sensitive body, a more delicate sense, more precious flesh, and by its very nature much more pleasant for eating: yet he is a rational animal, capable of mind and reason; he has a soul that is heavenly by nature, endowed with intelligence, inscribed with my image and likeness, marked with the light of my countenance, and capable of containing me within itself through knowledge and love. However, it is clothed with flesh; this body has been given to it as an organ and instrument for performing good works, justice, and judgment according to the laws of reason, so that, having done these, it may attain eternal glory and receive an imperishable crown in heaven based on merits. Therefore, in order to be able to perform these works that lead to eternal life, the body has been given to it. No one, therefore, should dare to deprive it of this organ, to prematurely strip it of this garment of flesh; and if anyone presumes to attempt this, if anyone, I say, sheds human blood, kills a man with cruel death, or subjects him to violent death, let him know that he will incur my wrath. For I will demand the blood of man for

retribution and vengeance, I will send the arrow of my wrath against the nefarious killer of man, I will afflict him with many punishments and calamities until destruction, until my sword devours his flesh and my arrows are drunk with his blood. For I will establish higher powers, to whom every soul shall be subject, princes, I say, who shall not be a terror to good works, but to evil, so that those who do good shall not fear the power, but shall have praise from it; but those who do evil shall fear, because princes are my ministers, avengers for wrath upon those who do evil. For this reason, they will bear the sword to punish those who do evil with death; and indeed their sword is my sword. Therefore, if anyone sheds human blood, by the sword of the prince and power his blood shall be shed, because man was made in the image of God. For the soul of man, He says, I will seek such vengeance and spare no one, whether a stranger or a relative, even if the man who shed blood is the brother of him whom he killed; I will seek his blood from the hand of his brother for retribution and vengeance. For it is a horrendous crime to unjustly kill a man, so much so that I will not tolerate it at all; not only will I seek vengeance if a man has shed human blood, but I will also seek it from the hand of every beast. For if there is any bad beast or the worst wild animal that naturally rages against man, that invades humans to tear, butcher, kill, and devour them, that attacks and seeks them, that grinds its teeth against humans as prey to death, I will seek that worst beast, I will arm humans against it, so that they may either capture it with traps, strike it with javelins, or pierce it with spears, until that worst beast perishes. Therefore, being more courageous and happier by my blessings: Be fruitful, that is, attend to propagation and generation, so that you may be fruitful and multiply on the earth until you fill it completely in every way."

Verses 8-11: And God said to Noah and to his sons with him:

"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with

you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, all that came out of the ark, every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Hebrew Text: And God said to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living soul of the beast that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, all that went out of the ark, for every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you, and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the waters of a flood, and there shall never again be a flood to destroy the earth."

There was still one thing that could bring Noah and his sons the gravest sorrow and inconsolable grief. "God has blessed us," they said, "so that we may grow into infinite progeny, so that we may multiply and fill the whole earth under heaven with our offspring; He has made us safe from harmful beasts and the worst wild animals so that we do not fear them at all, but rather they tremble and fear us at our sight; He has also provided for us against the miserable plague of hunger, giving us all animals for food, including an infinite number of fish; finally, He has warned us with great threats against homicides, so that we do not kill each other, brother against brother, nor be killed by cruel death. But who will make us secure against the flood, lest it again descend upon the earth in a time of great cataclysm, as we have seen, to destroy all flesh under heaven? If another flood is to come, what good are these blessings to us? What use are these gifts? What is the point of begetting children if they are to be destroyed again by a flood of waters? Our sorrow will be inconsolable to see our children perish before our eyes by an irremediable plague. What good is it to be safe from beasts if we are to perish with them in another coming flood? What good is this new

food? Certainly, these blessings cannot save us or our children from the calamity of a flood. What is the use of being protected from homicides? Death by drowning is not much better than being killed by a wicked hand. If the flood came because of human wickedness, when will there ever be a person on earth who does good and does not sin?

Therefore, the suspicion and fear of another flood afflicted them with the greatest sorrow and grief. Therefore, God also consoles them concerning this, saying:

"Behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature." The covenant I establish is this: never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. I have made you secure from the threat of destruction so that you will not die without offspring: secure from beasts, protected from famine, safeguarded from violent death. Now, I also make you secure from Myself, promising by My own self that I will not bring the waters of a flood again to destroy all flesh with the earth. And I make this covenant with you forever for future ages; not only do I make you secure from the flood, but also your descendants after you, that is, your children for perpetual generations until the end of the world. Indeed, because I created all animals and livestock and all living creatures, both heavenly and earthly, for the sake of man, and they are necessary for man to bear the burdens and many labors of life more easily: just as I preserved all the animals with you in the ark, so I also establish this covenant with them for your sake, so that never again in the future shall all flesh be destroyed by the waters of a flood, nor shall there ever again be a general flood in future ages over the entire earth under heaven, such as the one that destroyed the earth. The flood's inundation not only corrupted and destroyed all flesh from the surface of the earth, but it also greatly weakened and

nearly made sterile the earth's own strength and substance, hence it is said: "destroying the earth."

Verses 12-16: And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

Hebrew Text: And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I give between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. And it shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living soul in all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will see it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living soul in all flesh that is upon the earth."

So that the sons of Noah might know that God is faithful in all His words, because He had promised to establish a covenant with them for perpetual generations, ensuring that a flood would never come again, He now provides them with a sensible sign of this covenant, to make them more certain and secure in His promise.

As a sign of this covenant, He says that He will set His bow in the clouds. This bow is what philosophers have called the iris, and poets have imagined it to be the messenger Iris of Juno, as Virgil says:

"Juno sent Iris down from heaven,"

because such a bow announces rain, whence it is called ἵρις from εἶπεν, which means to say or announce.

Its nature and origin are as follows. When a denser and thicker cloud is positioned opposite the sun, too thick to allow the sun's rays to pass through, as it is ready to be resolved into rain, the rays of light, unable to pass through this cloud, are refracted back toward the sun. Reflected from the thick and almost watery cloud, they are directed back towards the dewy cloud in front of it and strive to reproduce the image or likeness of the light source as much as possible, similar to how visible species emanate like very subtle rays from a visible object. They pass unharmed through the air, which serves as a medium; but when a mirror is placed opposite, the rays easily pass through the transparent part of the mirror, but unable to penetrate the density of the metallic backing (lead or silver) of the mirror, they are reflected back and reproduce an image of the visible object as closely as possible in the transparent part of the mirror.

This is indeed how the rainbow appears. Since the light ray refracted by the luminary attempts to reproduce its image, but due to the excessive distance and the interposition of vapors between the sun and the terminating cloud, it represents the sun's image very obscurely and imperfectly; therefore, the rainbow appears in the cloud with an arched shape, adorned and distinguished by red, green, and purple colors. This distinction of colors arises because the farther the light ray extends, the weaker it becomes and less potent in brightness, tending towards a certain obscurity and a somewhat blackish hue. Consequently, the stronger ray, where it is first refracted, has a reddish and bright color, resembling a flame-like violet, which shares in the light's brightness to a considerable degree; but when it becomes weaker, it turns green; this color tends more towards darkness and a blackish hue. The ray, becoming

weaker again, finally turns red, which approaches black more closely than green.

Such is the natural cause and generation of the rainbow, as well as the halo; their generation is similar. When a cloud of uniform density, neither too thick nor too thin, is found directly under some luminary, the light ray, unable to pass through it, is struck and refracted: the uniform density of the cloud prevents it from proceeding directly, but it is retroactively diffused through the cloud's edges everywhere. By this refraction, a large circle appears under the star, illuminated with light, resembling a bright crown.

This circle, called a halo, appears under the sun and moon, as well as under other planets; it is, however, most frequently seen under the moon, which is why it is often called a lunar halo. The sun, with its intense heat, quickly disperses the cloud, not allowing it to remain long; the moon, however, does not have such power, and therefore the halo can appear more easily under it and last longer.

Thus, both the rainbow and the halo are produced by the refraction of the rays of the luminaries in a dense cloud: with this difference, however, that the rainbow forms directly opposite the luminary, while the halo forms directly beneath the star; and the rainbow appears darker due to its greater distance from the luminary, while the halo appears whiter and brighter due to its closer proximity to the star and stronger refraction of the rays. Furthermore, the rainbow lasts longer than the halo, because the halo, being directly opposed to the sun and much closer to it, is more quickly dispersed by it; the rainbow, however, forms at a greater distance and therefore is not immediately dispersed due to the distance; thus, the higher the sun is above our horizon, the smaller the rainbow appears: and indeed at noon, the rainbow is very small, while at sunrise or sunset, it appears as large as possible. Moreover, in the middle of summer around the summer solstice, when the days are longer, the rainbow cannot

appear at noon at all; after the autumn equinox, when the days are shorter, it can appear at any hour of the day due to the sun's distance and its limited dispersing power.

Finally, there is this difference between the rainbow and the halo: the halo always appears as a complete and perfect circle, enclosed all around; the rainbow, however, never appears to us as a complete circle or larger than a semicircle: it often appears as a semicircle, with one end touching one part of our horizon and the other end touching the other part; sometimes it appears as a portion smaller than a semicircle. It should also be noted that there is always one rainbow arc, not multiple caused by the rays; but if two or sometimes more appear, the second is an image of the first, distinguished by the same colors, but in a different order: so the first has red, green, and purple colors, while the second, in reverse order, has purple, green, and red; just as in a mirror, the image represents the object of which it is an image, and the latter that appears is much weaker than the former, as it is its image and is produced by the refraction of its rays. Similarly, if a third one appears, it is so weak that it can hardly be seen for the same reason.

Chapter Eleven

Verses 1-4: Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And one said to his neighbor, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." And they had bricks for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

Hebrew Text: And the whole earth was of one language and of the same words. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and dwelt there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach to heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

Chaldean Paraphrase: And the whole earth was of one language and one speech, etc.

Now the whole earth had one language. After describing the multiplication of the human race following the devastating flood, according to the Lord's blessing in which He blessed Noah and his sons to grow and multiply and fill the whole earth, Moses now prepares the way to the genealogy of the people from whom Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, was to be born in time. He again traces the genealogy of Shem straight from the root. But first, he recounts the event that led to the distinction of peoples, when previously they were all one people, like one family of Noah. This was the division of languages; for before, the whole earth was of one language and the same words,

meaning that there was one language for all, a common mode of speaking for all, and they all spoke the same words by which they expressed their internal thoughts and made them known to one another: for the things in the voice are signs and marks of the passions of the soul.

For a clearer understanding of this passage, we will note some points. First, by nature, man is capable of knowing all things outside himself, whether they are sensible or intelligible; he is capable of sensible things by sense, and intelligible things by intellect, mind, and reason. Therefore, our soul is said to become and be, in a way, all things: sensible things by sense, intelligible things by intellect; for both these faculties become one with these things to which they are naturally inclined when they are in act together and receive them within themselves. Thus, all things outside the soul, when received into the soul by either sense or intellect, become and are, as it were, formed in the soul as certain species and likenesses, like images that represent exactly those things outside. These are called concepts or conceptions of the soul, or simple apprehensions of the mind, as they are received in the soul.

Indeed, thoughts conceived in the innermost recesses of the heart and other inscrutable places lie hidden, nor can man reveal them to others by himself without the help of certain signs. Therefore, to express inner thoughts, he uses words as signs by his own will and decision. Hence, man has been provided by nature and the most provident Creator of nature with the best means of voice to express these thoughts. Not because the voice itself has this nature to explain inner thoughts; for by its nature, the voice is nothing else but a sound produced by an animal's mouth from the striking of air in the throat or larynx, which is struck and compressed there by air drawn from the lungs through respiration: yet it is capable of the intention of signifying something. Therefore, the voice itself is like the material of signification, just as silver is for coins and vessels. For

just as silver is not a vessel or coin unless a form is first imprinted on it, though it is naturally receptive; so clearly voices are not signs of concepts unless they are first established and imposed for signifying.

Therefore, names and verbs are not simply voices, just as neither is silver a vessel; but voices with the imposition and intention of signifying something. Thus, the voice is a sign of the internal concept not by nature, unless we take that voice and its significations, which even brute animals possess to express internal affections, such as the voices of the distressed and sad, and the joyful and delightful. For these naturally signify, which also by their nature signify their producer, such as the barking of dogs, the roaring of lions, and the lowing of oxen, and also the voice of man; for through the voice and speech, man is known, just as the lion by its roar and the dog by its bark. But that voice of man by which he explains mental concepts and known things is not a natural sign, but one at will by human institution. And voices indeed together with the intention of signifying express internal concepts by the principal institution: but afterwards, they express things known and conceived through such concepts; so that the first institution was intended for making concepts clear: secondly, for expressing the thing of which it is such a concept.

Therefore, the voice, whether it signifies a concept or a thing, is always at will, not by nature, as Aristotle believed. If Plato seemed to think otherwise, he nonetheless believed that names naturally signify. For if a skilled and very wise institutor of language imposes names on things that are suitable to the nature of things, it can be conveniently said that those names naturally signify: just as if one sees an image or some statue, which most closely imitates the nature of the one it represents, he will call it natural by δεινολογία (Dinologia), that is, exaggeration. But just as that carved statue

represents the thing not by nature, but by art, so too the voices of names and verbs.

Thus indeed we read in this sacred Genesis, when the Lord led all the living creatures that He had formed to Adam to see what he would call them, it is said: "Whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name." For he imposed the most suitable names on things, not because they had a meaning naturally suitable to the properties of the animals, but because he assigned such signs and meanings to the names that they indicated and manifested the most appropriate properties suitable to each animal.

We have thus far discussed what is common to humans. For just as nature is common to all, so too are internal passions and concepts; just as the things and those that are received into the soul through sense or intellect are the same in nature among all, from which those concepts first arise through intermediate species and likenesses. Then indeed, the voice with which man is endowed by nature to express his concepts is common to all humans, by which man is distinguished and recognized from other animals by hearing, and by which he naturally expresses internal natural affections of distress and joy, just as many other animals do that emit voice.

At that time, when this division of languages occurred, the same voices signifying by human institution at will were common to all and the same languages were used to reveal and manifest internal concepts of the mind to others; this is what is said: "Now the whole earth had one language and the same words." For the voices signifying names and verbs by will were the same for all, all humans signified one thing with the same voice and the same name, there was one way of speaking, one language; this means: one language, one speech property and idiom: and the same words, because that language did not have different dialects, as the Greek language has

five dialects, that is, ways of speaking: Ionic, Doric, Attic, Aeolic, and the common language.

However, the Hebrew source has: "one language": וְדִבְרִים אֶחָדִים, that is, and the same words. The word דָּבָר (dabar) among the Hebrews is accustomed to signify both speech and word and thing, or whatever underlies speech; with ה (he) by παραγωγή (paragoge) and custom, habit, eloquence; therefore, by these words perhaps the simplicity of affairs and matters, the similarity of customs, and the harmony of rites and minds are signified, which are usually very different, dissimilar, and discordant among the nations of different idioms; but among those who cultivate the same language and inhabit the same region, the customs and rites and harmony of minds are usually the same. And indeed those men all inhabited the same province, having the same idiom, therefore it is said: "The earth was of one language."

And when they journeyed from the east, the ark, as we read above, rested upon the mountains of Armenia, and Noah and his sons, after they had come out of the ark, dwelt in that region. But later, when they saw that the region was not very good and well-suited for habitation, they departed from there. Indeed, the region of Armenia is entirely mountainous, full of mountains everywhere; for in it are the Moschian mountains, which extend above the part of Pontus towards Cappadocia; Pariedrus, in which the sources of the Euphrates and Araxes rivers are found; Antitaurus, Taurus, and Niphates Cordica, from which the Tigris rises; the Caspian mountains, which extend towards the Medes, and the Caucasus, from which the Cyrus river originates. Therefore, when the region of Armenia seemed less suitable for habitation to those men, as it was entirely mountainous and rough, they all departed from there; and they are said to journey from the east, because the region of Armenia is more to the east than Babylonia and the region of the Chaldeans.

They found a plain in the land of Shinar and dwelt there. Now, the land of Shinar, which is now called Chaldea and Babylonia, is a flat region, not mountainous and rough, but a very wide and extensive plain, and very pleasant for habitation, very good and suitable; therefore, they decided to make their home and settlement there, considering that they had found the most suitable place. Therefore, they encouraged each other to build a city and a tower:

"Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire." Perhaps because that region was flat and plain, it did not have stones suitable for building, or they thought the building would be more stable if it were made of bricks, or also, as many think, because they already knew, with Noah their father as their teacher, that this world was reserved for fire, just as the previous one was for the flood; and stones indeed are reduced to lime by fire, but bricks are solidified even more by fire. Therefore, to ensure that the building would also remain unharmed by fire and last forever in future ages, they thought to construct it out of bricks. They had bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar; for these two are required for construction in terms of material: stones and clay. Therefore, they had bricks instead of stones, and instead of the clay that binds and connects the stones, they had bitumen, which is a very tenacious type of clay and a very strong adhesive.

Having therefore prepared those things that were necessary in terms of material for building, they said:

"Come, let us build a city and a tower whose top reaches to the heavens." Previously, when they remained under the authority of Noah, the father of them all, they lived humbly in tents and huts; but when Nimrod began to rule over men, they immediately thought to construct and build proud buildings, very fortified cities and walled towers, with Nimrod himself as the author. For he was the first of all to dare to seize lordship and dominion over men, being exceedingly

bold in spirit, and presuming to attempt to rule over the entire earth and all men under the sky. And as he excelled and surpassed everyone in bodily strength and far surpassed and overcame all, he also subjected everyone to his authority. For he was a giant with a vast and tall body, very strong in hand, bolder in spirit, whom no one dared to resist, as he had already formed an armed force; and he was very prudent and wise in counsel, yet with that prudence and wisdom which is of the flesh and hostile to God.

Therefore, here, having gathered a council of all men, he himself and those who played their parts persuaded everyone to build a city and a tower, which would be the seat of the kingdom and the metropolis and capital of the entire earth. This is what is said:

They said, one man to his neighbor: "Let us build a very large and magnificent city and surround it with very strong walls and ramparts; and in the middle of the city, let us build a very high tower as a fortress and the safest stronghold, whose top may seem to reach the heavens; and by making this work so wonderful and admirable, we will achieve the highest glory in future ages and will celebrate our name most gloriously for all eternity. Otherwise, inglorious and without monuments of our names, we will be scattered over all the earth, like sheep without a shepherd and a chief herder, nor a fold where they may be gathered. Therefore, before we are thus scattered (for this is easy unless we do this), let us build a city and a tower, where we may all be gathered to inhabit, and it will be the safest dwelling place for all of us and the seat and helm of our kingdom." The entire multitude consented, readily and willingly obeying Nimrod's command and following his will.

The stories that many tell, claiming that these men built the tower whose top would reach heaven so that they could ascend to heaven and fight against God in a celestial chariot, are clearly trifles of fables. For this is a tale of poets, who imagined giants to be born

from angry earth, with serpentine feet, tall in body, and ready in mind to expel Jupiter from his celestial seat. However, this shows that they were of unjust and impious mind against God, denying God's power and might, and always turning their thoughts and minds towards the infernal.

I cannot be persuaded to believe that all who built that city and tower were of that mind and spirit. Reason compels us to hold that all men came together to construct those buildings and contributed their labor, or at least their consent. For before that construction, all men had one language and the same speech, which became confused among all because of the construction of that building. Clearly, if not all had come together for that work to contribute their labor, the language would not have been confused among all; for it was confused to impede that work. And since that original language was Hebrew, if the language had not been confused among all, many nations would speak Hebrew. But if it was confused among all, why was it confused among all men if not all came together for that work, since the language was confused because of that work? But if all came together, who would ever say that Noah, who was still alive, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, and Eber, holy and just men, were of that mind and spirit? For if they had had the mind to reach heaven with the height of the tower and ascend into heaven, they would have proposed to build it on the highest mountains rather than in a valley or a low plain.

Nor does it seem plausible what many commentators say, that those men intended to build the very high tower in order to be saved there, should another great cataclysm of waters, like the preceding flood, come upon them. Indeed, all men were then assured of the divine promise, by which the Lord had made a covenant with Noah and all the living creatures of the earth, establishing an everlasting pact that would never pass away. If that had been their intention and purpose, it would have been much better and more fitting for them to build

the tower on the highest mountains of Armenia, where they would have had many and very large stones, so they would not need to bake bricks to serve as stones for them, and there were the most solid rocks upon which they could lay eternal foundations, and beyond any doubt, they would have been much safer from the inundation of waters on the highest mountains than in the valley and plains. For in valleys and flat areas of the earth, floods and inundations of waters occur much more easily, both because they not only provide a basin for the waters that rain down from the sky but also receive those that flow down from the mountains due to rains and the melting of snow, as if into their basins; but mountains always send waters down to the lower places. And it is the opinion of both ancient and modern Hebrews that it was called Shinar because שִׁנְעָר (Shin'ar) means "all the waters of the flood were scattered there," that is, that it flooded that place the most and stayed there the longest.

Therefore, their intention and purpose was to build a very large city of the most splendid and magnificent appearance, surrounded by very strong walls of great width and height, with a very high tower in its center, as a most fortified citadel, so that through that work they might celebrate their names in future ages, for all eternity, and live immortally in the memories of men, and so that all men might dwell together in that city, not being scattered without a firm habitation here and there into all parts of the world. And in that citadel of the city, their king and monarch, Nimrod, would reside, ruler of all men, so that the city would be the capital of the whole world, the seat of monarchy, and the beginning of the entire kingdom, as it was said above that Babylon was the head and beginning of Nimrod's kingdom.

Indeed, the walls of the city of Babylon, later restored by Queen Semiramis, were of such magnitude and strength to be regarded among the seven wonders of the world. For they are said to have

been fifty cubits wide and four times as high, that is, two hundred cubits high. They were, as it is said here, made of baked bricks joined with bitumen, wide enough that chariots meeting each other could easily pass. The circumference of the city was four hundred and eighty stadia; the height of the tower they were constructing, which they were still working on, was five thousand one hundred seventy-four paces; and it was very wide and very strong, so that to those who looked at it, the length seemed to diminish: for they intended to build it so high that its top would appear to reach the heavens. Its height was easily increased, and more than one could hope, by the many hands that worked on it. How great are the labors and burdens that the pursuit of worldly praise and the vain ambition of glory impose on men! To celebrate their names, they subjected themselves to the burdens of such great buildings and to undergoing and enduring such labors. But what punishment and great misery soon followed, we shall see.

Verses 5-9: "Then the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Adam had built, and said: 'Behold, they are one people and they all have one language: and this is what they began to do, and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language there, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' Thus the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them over the face of all regions."

Hebrew Text: "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built, and the Lord said: 'Behold, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is what they began to do, and now nothing will be withheld from them

which they have proposed to do. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.' And the Lord scattered them from there over the face of all the earth; and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them over the face of all the earth."

"And the Lord came down to see the city." This is anthropopathy, and Scripture speaks of God in human terms, accommodating our weakness and smallness. However, this passage most clearly declares the very vigilant providence of God, by which He contemplates all human actions. For what does it mean: "He came down to see," except that all human actions and works are naked and open to His eyes, and He diligently and deeply attends to them? Similar is the phrase: "I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know." And this: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry... and I have come down to deliver them." Certainly, God is not changed by place, who fills every place everywhere: "For I the Lord do not change; I fill heaven and earth." Therefore, He is said to descend by the effects which He works, while He moderates human actions, either by showing mercy or by inflicting punishments for sins.

Therefore, by the effect which He worked, He is described as having descended to see the city and the tower which the sons of men were building; for they were now continuing the construction of buildings. Since, however, unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain: seeing the proud minds of these people and the great mass of the city and the tower, which they were building up to heaven, the Lord descended to place obstacles in the way of these works. For they were building these structures not for God, but for themselves: "Let us build for ourselves a city and a

tower," they said; not for the honor and glory of the Most High God, but they were undertaking these works for worldly glory, loving it more than God, to celebrate their own name; not a city in which God, the King and Emperor of all, would reign over them, and where divine laws and divine rights would be established and observed; but so that in it the impious Nimrod, a cruel hunter, would reign, who would establish unjust laws and write iniquity, so that the poor would be oppressed in judgment, and violence would be done to the cause of the humble...; so that widows would be their prey, and they would plunder orphans; not to build a temple and divine house, in which God would dwell, in which the highest piety and religion would be cultivated, in which divine honors would be celebrated and, with synagogues gathered, with convocations called, with churches of the faithful people assembled into one, divine praises would be sung; but they were building a tower which would be the seat of Nimrod and a secure and faithful dwelling place for his leaders and soldiers. Nor were they undertaking this humble work with a lowly structure, but a lofty and very high one, so that, if it were possible, it would reach heaven: "Whose top," they said, "will reach the heavens," by which their bold temerity is designated through hyperbole.

Therefore, God, seeing their vain plan as the cause of many evils and the harmony of their voices providing the occasion for these evils, decided not to allow them to continue their works to the end; but He removes the cause of the disease, like a wise doctor seeing the disease increasing, lest the ulcer become incurable, immediately uses surgery.

"Behold," He said, "they are one people and they all have one language: and this is what they began to do, and now nothing will be withheld from them that they propose to do. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language." There was still one race of men, born of one father, Noah; they all formed one family, because they

all derived their origin from one lineage and were all related and connected. There was no diversity among them either of origin or race, or of customs, rites, and religion, voice or language, or country: but they were altogether one people, one congregation of men, one society. And just as they all had the same nature, the same passions and affections, so they had the same way of life, common sustenance, rites, and religion: one voice was common to all, one language, which they had inherited from one father. However, they abused these goods, and what is naturally good became the cause of their downfall. Therefore, since this peaceful community and harmonious unity of the people was becoming harmful to them, He said: "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language: let us divide this harmony and break the unity of their voice and language, so that with the languages divided, this one people will also be divided into many."

He said: "Let us go down," using the voice of the plural, just as He also said: "Let us make man." For the Father addresses the divine Hypostases proceeding from Himself, natures equal in power, co-eternal in age, equal in power, honor, and dignity, and in all things co-equal.

Some of the Hebrews say that God here addresses the assembly of judgment, so that when He wished to descend to judge the sons of men, all His saints would come with Him. But Rabbi Abrabanel refutes this, saying that "if this were so, it should have been mentioned first. For why is it not said that God and the assembly of judgment confused the languages? And behold, it immediately follows that the Lord confused the language of all the earth there, and from there the Lord scattered them over all the earth: which indeed shows that God alone was the cause of these effects." He interprets it differently, referring it to divine providence. For the Lord, who knows the secrets of the hearts and judges everyone according to their ways, when He comes to judge these men, does

two things: that the first language and tongue, which was one for all, should be left; and that other languages and distinct idioms should be found and established. And the first indeed He did by Himself; but to find and establish the different languages, He chose leaders from among them, who were the heads of families, who would sustain their governance, and therefore He speaks in the plural voice.

But I ask, were not these leaders on earth and together with others building the city and the tower? How then does God say: "Let us go down and confuse their language there"? What it means to confuse their language He immediately explains, saying: "That they may not understand one another's speech": that is, so that they may not understand what one wants to signify by the voice, so that they hear the sound of the voice indeed but do not understand its meaning. But why does this confusion occur? Because, He said, they began to do this, and they will not desist from their thoughts until they complete them by their works.

There has been a question among commentators about whether those who wanted to build the city and the tower sinned, and why God wanted to hinder their works; and some have thought they sinned, while others have thought otherwise.

Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra and Rabbi Levi ben Gerson say that they did not sin, but that it was due to divine providence that they were prevented from completing that very large city, which was rather a region surrounded by walls than a city, and the tower. For their purpose and intention in constructing those buildings was to live together in one community and social commerce; therefore they say: "Lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Since man is a civil, political, and social animal, he desires a civil and social life. Therefore, wanting to fulfill this natural desire through their works, they did not sin, for that desire is not evil. And if they were not building those structures solely for that reason, but

also to celebrate their name in future generations, certainly the love of honor and glory is not altogether bad. For if a man can licitly desire riches and wealth without offending God, why not also honor, which is much better than many riches, provided it does not detract from divine honor in any way?

But if they did not seek that glory against divine honor, why did God, who inflicts punishment on no one unjustly, destroy their works and efforts? They say, because many evils detrimental to the human species, indeed leading to its utter destruction, could have followed from all men living together in one place. For many cities, provinces, and kingdoms have entirely perished through wars and civil strife; if this had happened when all men lived together, surely all would have perished. And since that small corner of the earth could not have sustained or contained such a large multitude of people, and all men love their native land and birthplace so much that exile from one's country is among the greatest punishments, no one would have willingly wanted to migrate from there to foreign and unknown lands. Hence, many disputes, quarrels, strifes, seditions, and civil wars would have arisen among the cohabitants.

If that had not happened, the land would not have been able to provide sufficient sustenance for such a large multitude to live a decent life, at least frugally; hence, they would have always suffered from hunger, poverty, and the lack and dearness of things. Then diseases would have prevailed, leading to the great destruction of people; if a plague had spread among them, all would very easily have perished. Then if, due to the influx of celestial signs or heavy rains over that region, a cataclysm had occurred, like that of Deucalion or Ogyges, all could have perished, submerged by the flood of waters. Finally, when they had fallen into many errors and heinous sins, when their sins had ascended to heaven, fire would have descended from heaven and consumed them all, as it did to Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities of the Pentapolis.

Therefore, to prevent the entire multitude of people from being affected by these evils and going to ruin, divine providence took care of it by the confusion of languages, through which they were dispersed over all the regions of the earth. This is the opinion of these scholars.

Others, however, do not agree, and Rabbi Abrabanel inveighs against this view, saying that it is far from the intention of the law. For from the day they left the ark, they lived together in one society; yet none of those evils that are mentioned befell them, nor were they scattered, nor was their language confused until they began to build the city, and none of those evils occurred to them in that plain of Shinar to this day.

Those who believe they sinned, some say that they built that tower against God, as the poets fable about the giants: others say that they did this very arrogantly. But even if some desire for glory and an itch for praise moved and induced them to carry out this work, since their desire for worldly praise is not seen here to have raised its head against God to the extent that divine honor was diminished by their increase, why are they punished with such a penalty?

But if we look more closely into the whole matter, we will clearly find that they sinned against God and that their desire for praise and honor and vain ambition for glory did indeed detract not a little from divine honor but actively opposed God. Since God is the creator of all men and by His nature is Lord, His is the power, His is the kingdom and dominion: He wills to rule men by Himself. Hence, when He chose the seed of Abraham, He Himself willed to rule immediately over him, to govern him, and to reign over him as king, as He said in Deuteronomy: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Hence, He gave them the law and judicial rights, and He Himself appointed judges of the people whom He chose, who would judge the people according to the laws given by

God. Thus He chose Moses, Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, and Samuel, not as kings who would take tribute from the people, but as judges. Therefore, when the Israelites, all the elders of Israel, gathered to Samuel in Ramah and asked for a king over them, as other nations had, this request greatly displeased Samuel, because, as Samuel said, they had done a great evil in the sight of the Lord by asking for a king over them. Therefore, the Lord gave voices and rains and lightning from heaven as a sign of His anger and vengeance for such a great evil, because, He said to Samuel, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."

Thus it clearly happened now. For just as the Lord ruled and governed the people of Israel Himself as king and lord through judges chosen by Him and exercised royal power over them, so God from the beginning willed to rule and govern men alone with royal power. For royal power is the greatest that can be found and is free from laws, which suits God alone by His nature; nevertheless, He ruled through judges who were sons of men, such as Adam, Seth, Enos, etc., up to Noah. And perhaps those judges were called sons of God because the word of God was directed to them regarding the judgment of the people's cases, as we clearly see in Moses. And thus God alone reigned over men until Nimrod came; whom, when men saw born and grown into a giant in body, powerful in strength, very strong in hand, bold in mind, discreet and prudent in counsel, though with worldly prudence, and ambitious and desirous to rule and dominate all, they chose him as king, rejecting God's rule, and all committed themselves to him and his dominion, and they rejected God from reigning over them.

Nimrod, however, elated by his dominion and proud in mind, incited men to injury and contempt of God, persuading them not to attribute their happiness to God but to their own strength. In this way, he turned men away from the fear of God and led them to place all their

hope in their own strength. Hence, he persuaded them to build that very large city and the very high tower so that this city would be the principal seat of the monarchy of the whole world and the key to the kingdom. Thus, by constructing these magnificent buildings through their own strength and skill, they would celebrate their name for eternal ages and immortal memory, thinking this to be happiness.

Therefore, their sin was that, by choosing and appointing Nimrod as king and monarch of the entire human race, prince, and lord of all men, they withdrew themselves from the dominion of God. And the more they were intent on their own glory, the more they detracted from divine honor. Since they were constructing the city and the tower for the glory and magnificence of their chosen king and to immortalize their names in the eternal memories of men, and disregarding the providence of divine rule as trivial and insignificant, they deprived God of the highest honor and royal office. Seeing, therefore, their thoughts and that they would not desist, nor could they be prevented by the authority, piety, or exhortation of the holy men Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, and Heber, nor would they cease until they completed what they had planned; God, not enduring that one man should be set over the entire multitude of men with full royal power, especially since he was so impious that he strove with all his might to turn men away from the fear of God, worship, religion, faith, hope, piety, and charity towards the Supreme God and lead them into idolatry; in His supreme wisdom and incomprehensible counsel of His will, He provided for this not to happen through the confusion of languages.

And although He allowed them, out of the freedom of their will, to think and deliberate against the decree and disposition of the divine will, He did not allow them to carry out what they had planned; He did not take away their will or force it, but He removed their ability. For they intended to live together in that city under their chosen king Nimrod. However, living together means communicating in mind

and word, not merely grazing together in the same place like brute animals; but they communicate in mind who make their internal passions known to each other, which lie hidden under the impenetrable veil of the heart and in the secret place. This expression and manifestation is done through words; for those things which are in the voice are the signs and tokens of the passions in the soul; but those who do not have the same voices to declare their concepts cannot live together and cohabit as one, because they disagree in the better and more important thing, namely in understanding and will, since they cannot communicate to each other what they understand and what they will.

Therefore, the diversity of languages alienates man from man. For if two people meet and cannot pass by each other but are forced by some necessity to be together, because neither knows the language of the other, mute animals of different species would more easily associate with each other than those two, even though they are humans. When they cannot communicate their feelings to each other due to the sole diversity of languages, the great similarity of nature does not help to bring men together, so much so that a man would rather be with his dog than with a foreign man. Therefore, the all-knowing and most wise God wisely provided for this confusion of languages, so that all men would not live together in that one city under that one king.

He confused their languages in this way: He disturbed their minds and reasoning with a great perturbation and, as if by some kind of erasure, wiped out and obliterated the habits by which they knew the words and their meanings to express mental concepts in that one language and idiom they all previously had; and He instilled in their minds and thoughts certain imaginations and images for articulating new voices and forming words to express the mental concepts within and also to signify things outside the soul as if by certain signs.

Thus, the Lord scattered them from that place over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. How admirably wise was the way in which God destroyed both their plan and their purpose! They all came together in one place, namely the plain of Shinar, to live there under one leader; and from that place, God dispersed them over all parts of the earth by confusing their language so that, just as they could not, they would also not want to live together anymore: but, driven by mutual hatred, fleeing from each other, they sought different regions and lands to inhabit.

Nimrod, however, remained in the region of the plain of Shinar with those who shared the same language with him, frustrated in his hope of dominion over all men. Since he was powerful in strength, very strong in hand, and equally bold in mind, he was not entirely deprived of royal power; but he exercised not just a royal office, but imperial power over all who stayed with him, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon: Therefore, the place was called Babel, because there the language of the whole earth was confused.

As for the time when this confusion of languages and division of nations happened, not all agree. The opinion of almost all Hebrews is that it happened in the three hundred fortieth year after the flood, ten years before Noah's death, and in the forty-eighth year of Abraham's life, since he was born in the two hundred ninety-second year after the flood.